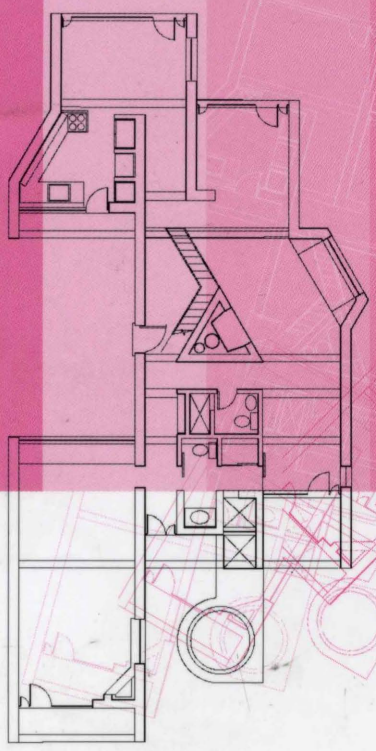

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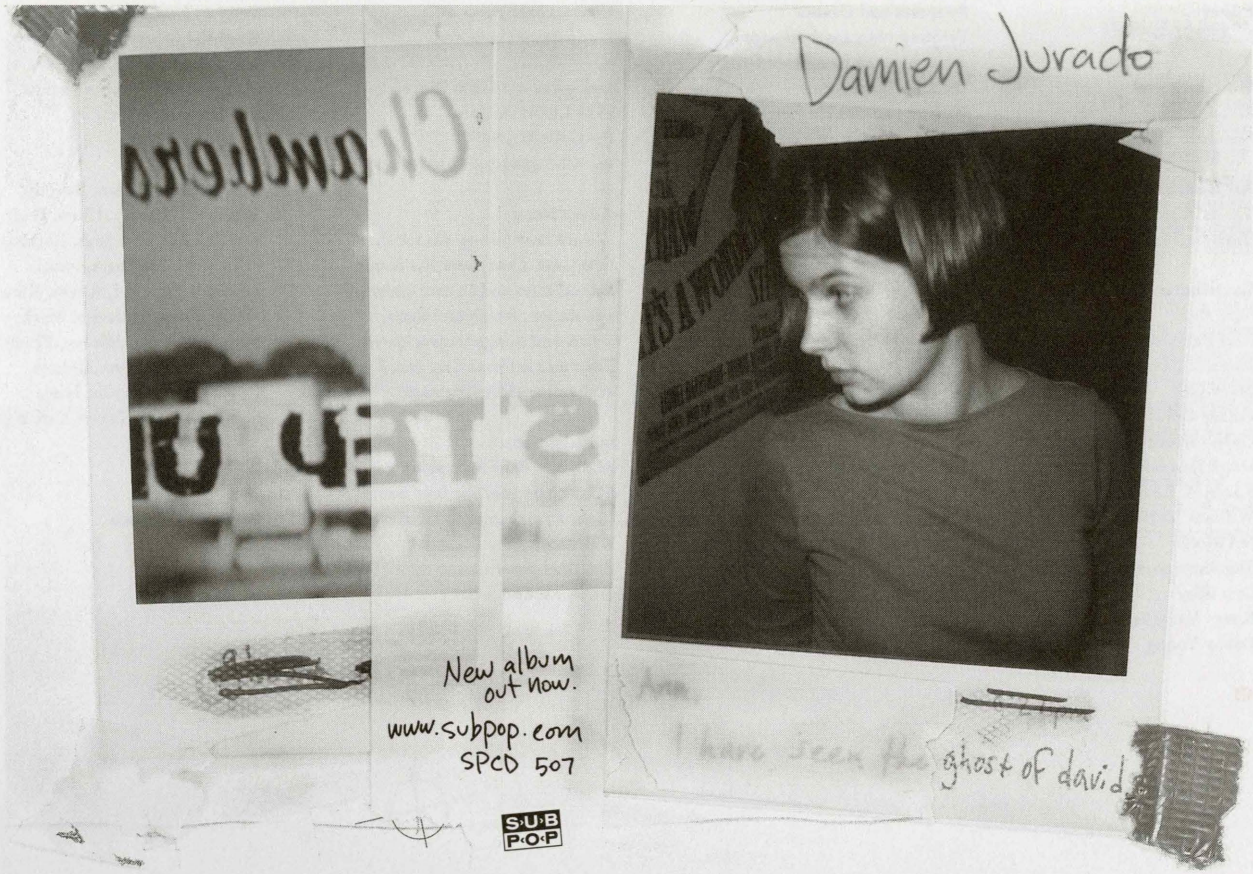

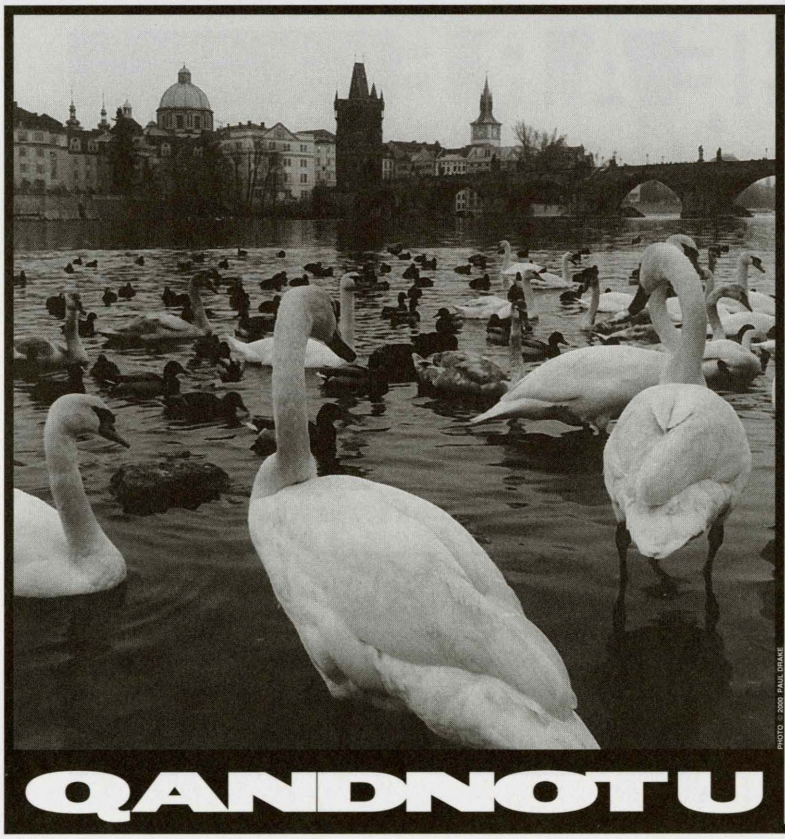

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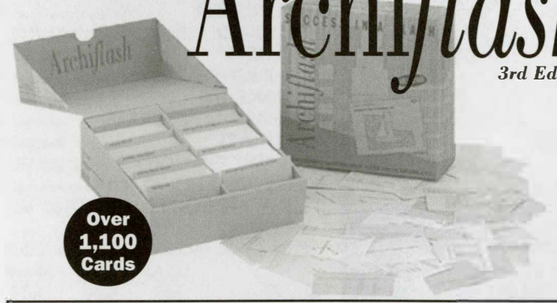

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Loud paper is dedicated to increasing the volume of architectural discourse. It is a slambamgetitoutthere way of linking architectural thoughts, musings and new work with the culture at large.

Loud paper is open to all students, architects, educators, girls about town, dear Johns and critics as a place for writing loud about architecture and culture.

Submissions of articles, projects, book and music reviews are encouraged.

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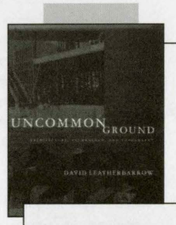

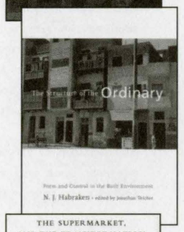

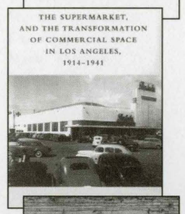

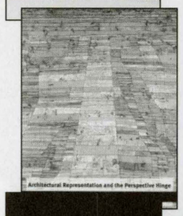

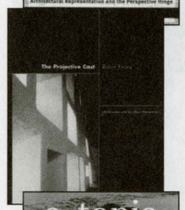

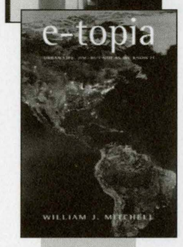

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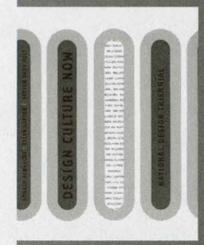


DESIGN CULTURE NOW: NATIONAL DESIGN TRIENNAL

Princeton Architectural Press, 2000
Donald Albrecht, Ellen Lupton and Steven Skov Holt
reviewed by Karen A. Levine

It is almost inconceivable that the first-ever design triennal should take place in the year 2000. Many of us have spent decades chasing the ever-evolving signs of designed culture, from Rubik's Cube, Pac Man and the first Mac computers to Nike swoosh sneakers, Jordache jeans and Talking Heads albums. It is only now that we are practically immune to good design in our lives—when we have become unconscious consumers of the shoddy, the branded and the mass produced—that the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum has unleashed the National Design Triennial. Organized by Donald Albrecht, Ellen Lupton and Steven Skov Holt, the triennial has been broadly defined to encompass architecture, landscape architecture, environmental design, graphic design, new media and product design. (The exhibition was on view from March 7 to August 6, 2000, in New York City.)

There are two organizing principles at work in *Design Culture Now*, the triennial's companion catalogue. Because of the remarkable variety of projects represented in this volume, the work of each designer has been slotted into one of eight curatorial categories: fluid, physical, minimal, reclaimed, local, branded, narrative and unbelievable. But the authors also want us to use this book as a reference source, a "dictionary of ideas." As a survey, the book does a tremendous job; this may well be the best one-volume introduction to the finest emerging and established designers on the American scene today. As a dictionary, the book is less successful. Although *Design Culture Now* does indeed present an enormous range of abstract concepts and trends, clear definitions prove a bit slippery. To wit: The authors ask us to understand the letterpress-influenced graphic design of Bruce Licher's Independent Project Press as "physical," but also place it, as if on a sliding scale, under "reclaimed," "local" and "branded."

If today's design disciplines are in a state of enormous flux, they are also at a stage of remarkable invention and innovation. Donald Albrecht, the book's expert on architectural design, notes that the work of today's best architects, landscape architects, set designers, and exhibition designers expresses "a fascination with the hybrid" and exploits techniques of collage and/or transformation. Grafting the organic with the minimal, architect Steven Holl's "sponge scheme" for a series of MIT dormitories that are now under construction is designed, in part, to allow the neighboring community to visually penetrate the academic fortress. Michael Gabellini's plan for the Piazza Isolo in the ancient city of Verona, Italy, posits the public square, market and underground garage as a linked network of ultramodern "islands" bridging the surface of a surrounding moat. And Ralph Appelbaum's stimulation exhibition environments layer three-dimensional objects and digital display, melding the new realm of infotainment with the tradition of the *wunderkammer*.

Similarly, the most forward-thinking of today's graphic designers are not afraid to mine the past. Stephen Farrell of Slip Studios has created a sensational typeface called Volgare based on the handwriting of an anonymous seventeenth-century Florentine clerk. Zuzanna Licko of Emigre publishes baroque patterns composed by rotating basic letterforms. Funny Garbage cheerfully muddies the pristine perfection of Web site designs with forms derived from pop culture's cast-off ephemera—comics, bar codes, candy wrappers, printer's waste. Perhaps the most theatrical graphic designer included in the volume, Stefan Sagmeister uses base materials such as fabric, cardboard, even his own body to spell out content in his work.

While the "unbelievable" category seems to have been concocted mainly to embrace product prototypes, attractive, alarming and seemingly impossible product designs are scattered throughout the book. From the Haworth Office Exploration Team's bizarre cubicle alternatives, which look like something out of a David Cronenberg film and aim to make "the office function more like the brain," to Stephen Peart's fleshy concept athletic shoe, which makes its wearer look like something out of a Cronenberg film crossed with the god Mercury, the most effective product designs—whether executed for commercial use or not—suggest a seductive narrative quality. As Holt points out, in our present American culture, "Products have become containers for [our] stories, and designers have correspondingly become storytellers and even mythmakers."

If we are swallowing these tales, hook, line and sinker, it may not be for the right reasons. It is awfully tempting to read this book as a kind of glorified mail-order catalogue (move over Williams-Sonoma and J. Crew!). The wonder of design exhibitions is that they send people running straight to the store, aching to get their hands on that Tibor Kalman paperweight or Philippe Starck exacto knife. I don't know about you, but I'm going shopping. I can't wait to get one of Scott Wilson's Swingline staplers, a copy of Martin Venezky's *Speak* magazine, a Kate Spade handbag, and a Chris Ware comic book. Products be damned—according to the folks at the Cooper Hewitt, this is *art* ■■

SITE OF SOUND: OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE EAR

Errant Bodies Press, 1999

reviewed by Carl Bergamini

For some time we have been living in a culture where information, ideology and ideas disseminate primarily through visual media. This culture privileges the eyes, sight over the other senses, and we are witnessing the decline of printed and oral cultures and the ascendance of the picture in its many forms—photography, film, television and video. While continued investment in telecommunications, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence make it unlikely that this trend will be reversed, changes also may be in the works. Technological developments are providing opportunities for disparate media to come together in integrated packages, as multimedia. These new forms of multimedia create an experience, through spectacle and mediation, which acknowledges the body's senses in the construction of everyday life.

Grounding itself firmly in the camp of the body, the main premise of *Site of Sound: Of Architecture and the Ear* is that sound exists as a powerful presence that determines the shape of the world, contributing to our understanding of self, community and environment. The book's collection of art projects, essays, interviews and CD selections sets out to shake up our outmoded notions of music and hearing. They assert that listening as a practice can unveil systems of power, structures of society and rhythms of life.

While it sets out to explore highly intriguing questions, the book's 32 contributions and 17 CD tracks fall short of any coherent and revealing answer. The book comes off more like an exhibition catalog than it does a serious work in its own right. With an average of one submission every four pages, there appears to be a scarcity of content, a whole lot of jargon and an over-reliance on eye-catching graphic design, ironic given the book's stated mission. While the book also contains an attached CD, there is not enough connection between its tracks and the passages in the book to make it valuable.

There are, however, interesting moments and engaging selections. Asserting that music begins with perception rather than composition, David Dunn's "Purposeful Listening in Complex States of Time" includes a musical score intended to orchestrate our attention. Through the score, he creates a composition that exists purely in conjunction with ones memory, aspirations and the surrounding ambient soundscape. The work functions as a "tactic" (in de Certeau's sense of the word) through which one can escape the totalizing effects of mediated culture and instead carve out a realm of independent thought, action, bodily experience.

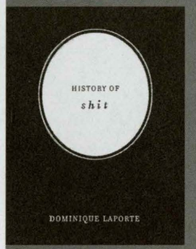
Editor Brandon LaBelle's "Architecture of Noise" continues this line of thinking through a discussion of "musique concrète" and the Situationist International. In much the

same way that the Situationists used the practice of walking in the city as a way of resisting the order that architecture imposes on the body, "musique concrète" used the recording process to re-appropriate and re-contextualize the noise and events around us. The practice is similar to the contemporary use of computer sampling. The recomposed soundscape like the *dérive* had the potential "to disrupt ones organization of the senses in order to imagine the very nature of constructed reality."

Some selections are downright silly. Christof Mignone's piece "Crackers," for instance, compiles recordings and written descriptions of people cracking their various body joints. The premise that one can "create a portrait of the city, through the cracking bones of its citizens" comes off as grossly reductive and somewhat insulting to real cities and real people.

Other selections are highly technical and inaccessible to the lay reader. Jio Shimizu's: "Concerning the Relationships between Space, Objects, and the Production of Sound" delves deeply into the phenomenology of sound, the specifics of its production and its human reception. While interesting on some level, one wonders about the relevance of such a project. The emphasis on sound for its own sake seems a bit indulgent and skirts the issue of how sound helps us understand social space.

On the whole however, *Site of Sound* appears to miss an opportunity to explore with depth a politics of place and body based on hearing. As multimedia it fails to coalesce. It might be better to put the book down and follow instead the advice of contributor Hildegarde Westercamp: put aside an hour of time and go for a walk in your neighborhood. Do nothing but listen ■▮



HISTORY OF SHIT

MIT Press, 2000, Dominique Laporte
Translated by Nadia Benabid and Rudolphe el-Khoury
reviewed by Dru Siley

The new release from MIT Press delves into a subject that may spark an e-coli scare. Rubber gloves and a face mask are unnecessary but an interest in virtually unmentionable acts and socially uncomfortable ideas could be useful.

According to Dominique Laporte's treatise the *History of Shit* one of the most significant results of human production is also its most base. Analyzing society and culture from the bottom up, no pun intended, Laporte historically documents the relationship human beings have had with their own feces and the resultant norms, laws, rituals, inventions and even architecture and landscape architecture. As the author states, "To touch, even lightly, on the relationship of a subject to his shit, is to modify not only the subject's relationship to the totality of his body, but his very relationship to the world...and society."

Originally published in 1978 during the post-student revolt days in France, this work is a part of a theoretical ideology that hoped to produce unique and innovative ways to scrutinize the world. Scatology, as a tool for cultural analysis, could easily be dismissed for its shock value or novelty. Though often comical and seemingly mocking of academic discourse, the *History of Shit* overcomes such a dismissal because of its thorough and compelling presentation of the topic.

Edicts demanding the removal of shit from language and from the city, cults worshipping shit, shit as skin toner, the social status of shit, the smell of shit, shit as detergent, shit ingested for longevity and, most important, shit as commodity or resource—just a few of the ideas that play a part in Laporte's discussion of the constantly fluctuating involvement people have with excrement.

Throughout the book, "shit" is described not only as a literal meaning but also as a metaphor for the unwanted. In this way, shit is more of a concept regarding objects, ideas and practices that have been dubbed undesirable by a given society. This allows Laporte's thesis to have wider reaching implications while providing interesting documentation of the ways shit has been managed and used, sometimes frighteningly, by various cultures.

In our age of recycling it is poignant that a treatise on waste and embodying a theme of, "one person's shit is another person's gold," can be weighed for its significance. The *History of Shit* becomes a tome metering humankind's lack of foresight and its ambivalence when is comes to waste. As Laporte points out, "that which occupies the site of disgust at one moment in history is not necessarily disgusting at the proceeding moment or the subsequent one." Standing on the shoulders of the past, as we do through Laporte, the view of history's shit piles remind us of a valuable lesson. That lesson is, and should be remembered as a fundamental tenant of environmental stewardship, that possibly within our own modern day crap or waste or by-product or filth is a resource yet overlooked.

Here we can make a leap from Laporte's ideology to the practices of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. Though such correlation is not often strongly made in the text, carry over of the idea is not difficult and lends itself to imaginative possibilities. As populations continue to boom, the idea of a wasted (shit) space becomes impossible and impractical. We must continue to consider that instead of eating up undisturbed areas we should pursue designs that reuse and reclaim places once discarded. Vacant lots, nuclear test sites, mines, decaying structures and abandoned amusement parks, to name a few, are rife with opportunity to become valuable again.

Further discussion and investigations into the unusual perspectives broached by the *History of Shit* will expand contemporary thinking and hopefully promote proactive uses of shit (the unwanted and the discarded) instead of repeating historical misfortunes ■▮

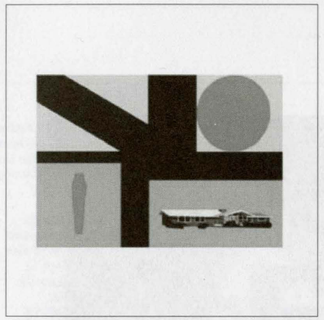
The Revolution May Not Be Digitized

by Mimi Zeiger

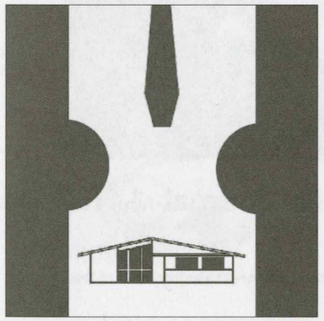
To talk about architectural representation these days is to talk about computer imaging and the uploads and downloads which follow the 01010101 of those drawings. Even the smallest of practices have long since upgraded from Maylines and drafting boards to keyboards. It's archaic, even sentimental, to think back to those types of architectural representations: hand lettering, site plans rendered in felt-tip marker and even the old chipboard study model.

It is hip and modern to think of the future of architecture in candy-colored tones gently undulating under artificial light. Even fashion and lifestyle magazines have grabbed onto the digital trend. Over the summer an issue of *Surface* magazine was dotted with CAD-like line work and three-dimensional wire frames in order to illustrate upcoming trends in fashion and design. This may be all well and good for architects and designers, but some artists have been picking through architecture's dustbin of history and using the bits of nostalgic representation that they find there in their artwork.

I noticed these old modes creeping away from the pages of now-defunct *Progressive Architecture* or AIA local offices and into pop culture sometime last year. The liner art for the Saint Etienne EP *Places to Visit* featured a textbook example of architectural pen and ink rendering circa 1982. An entourage of casual walkers made there way across a landscape of street furniture, planters and retaining walls, the black lines coming together just enough to tie the drawing together, but not enough to make anyone question whether or not it was an exercise in realism. It is weird to see images from the specialized archive of "practice" re-enter contemporary popular culture. These are images make practitioners cringe when they see that architectural representation bends to the whims just as much a fashion as any other cultural product.



Mark Danielson. *Extra Dimension*, 1999



Mark Danielson. *Everyone in Red*, 1999

Last spring the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presented, *Walking Unafraid*, the first solo show of British artist David Miles. Miles' work embraces basic architectural representation and exploits its old-fashioned connotations. The content of the work is a bit odd. The show consisted of several object prototypes constructed somewhat carefully out of chipboard, which were invented to deal with fearful situations like your bike being stolen or getting mugged. All the artworks are numbered and categorized as to what they apparently do. One such piece is *Device #10*: device to stop nightmares/keep away the hordes of evil. It looks like the type of garden sprinkler you attach to a hose, but made by a first year design student out of chipboard. Miles claims that this device actually will stop nightmares and to back up his claim he presents a foam-core model along side the device. Inside the model is a person sleeping in a bed with a trusty *Device #10* on his bedside table. Outside the model, monstrous clay figurines are stopped from entering the house.

The work of Seattle artist Mark Danielson takes architectural inspiration from *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Art and Architecture* from the'50s and '60s. He incorporates the domesticated modernism that epitomized these publications into his acrylic paintings. The flat paint mimics the architectural illustrations,

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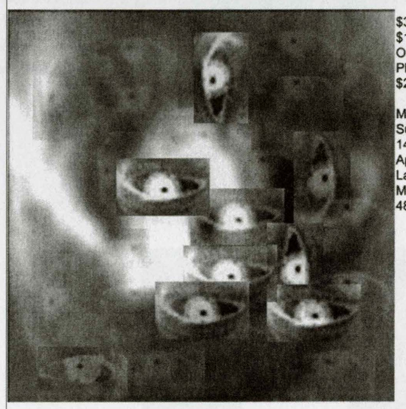

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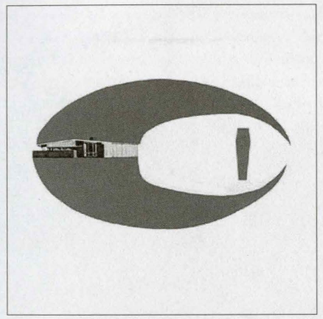
which marketed these homes to millions of postwar Americans, documenting the shallow sloped roofs of ranch homes in both perspective and elevation.

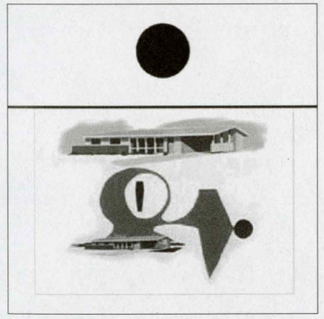
Although he relishes the optimism inherent in the representation of these houses, in the same way Miles makes use of the quaintness of un-finessed models, Danielson's work is not without a dystopic vision. It seems that it is impossible to escape the national consciousness of irony and self-loathing that comes along with documents of suburbia. A concoction of teen angst and Valium seem to emanate from the wood paneling and carports. A coffin-shaped form haunts the recent collection of Danielson's paintings on view at the Howard House Gallery in July. Like a bad omen it looms in each work creating compositional balance but is emotionally unsettling. The 1997 piece, *Inoculation Tent*, plays a shallow elevational perspective illustration of a ranch home opposite a blue field containing a white blob. In the white is an orange coffin. While it seems that the white blob could be the tent-saving the house from the death outside-the juxtaposition of it against the house implies that the house itself might be the place for a much-needed inoculation.

In architectural representation is it easy to wish that drawings, models and renderings convey a timelessness strong enough to escape fashion and current pop cultural norms. However, the rise and re-use of older modes allows us to take more meanings from the work. While there may be some kind of "retro" or kitsch appreciation of these forms going on by these artists and by designers working in commercial media, their regeneration into artwork serves to remind architects of the presence of alternative representational modes. The inherent darkness presented in the work of Miles and Danielson saves architectural representations from the landfill, and recycles them into a new, albeit slightly twisted, vision ■▮

all paintings courtesy of Howard House Gallery



Mark Danielson. *Inoculation Tent*, 1997



Mark Danielson. *Cross Ventilation*, 1997

teen urbanism

photos by shit incorporated

by kazys varnelis

For the first time in history, urbanism no longer belongs to planners or to aged master architects; it belongs to the young. The last decade's rapid and completely unplanned urban change, from the unchecked sprawl of Phoenix to the booming development of the Pearl River delta, forces us to conclude that the most remarkable thing about architecture and urban planning at the dawn of the twenty-first century is their noticeable absence. What Rem Koolhaas calls "Junkspace" has won. We have covered the world in a landscape of the formulaic, the banal and the lowest common denominator.

In the new political landscape of radically small but incredibly powerful constituencies—from NIMBY homeowners, rich and poor, to guilt-ridden neo-Stalinist anti-rail activists—it is no longer possible for city leaders and planners to implement urban plans. Meanwhile, the avant-garde has come to a whimpering end in the polished antique halls of Manhattan's Century Club and the boardrooms at MoMA. There, the last holdouts of a once powerful elite meet, a group that Philip Johnson calls his "kids": at last count, Peter Eisenman, Richard Meier, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves, Frank Gehry, Robert Stern, and even, tragically, Koolhaas himself.[1] Lauded in a recent issue of *Architecture* magazine for epitomizing "Power," these "Kids"—led by a nonagenarian and virtually all senior citizens themselves—are more like a small town fraternal order than like eighteenth-century freemasons, their most remarkable legacy being their virtual inability to produce anything urbanistically significant.

To blame either technocrats or architects for their failure to realize physical urban form, however, would be futile. Already as early as 1938, Louis Wirth, one of the members of the "Chicago School" of sociology, unleashed urbanism from any particular physical quality. Wirth was concerned with defining urbanism in a sociologically rigorous way and thus came to an understanding of the city as constituted not as a physical structure but rather as a way of life. In his "Urbanism as a Way of Life," Wirth defined urbanism as being marked by a large and heterogeneous population, a density that concentrated that population and the new forms of behavior and relationships that resulted.

Urban life, Wirth noted, stood in stark contrast to rural life. Rural people knew their place, occupying territories that their ancestors had lived in for time immemorial. Their bonds and even their rivalries with their neighbors were centuries old. Kinship systems and caste structures made one's position in society clear. Almost always, the population of the village was homogeneous in thought and blood. In contrast, for Wirth, urban life meant being uprooted from that traditional place to a new environment filled with sociologically heterogeneous individuals. Under the pressure of encountering more people more frequently at close physical proximity, the city dweller would be forced to develop a stronger sense of self to survive. The result would be the emergence of a more sophisticated, hybrid cultural production as the individual strove to articulate his or her differences from others.[2]

If for Wirth, urbanism referred to a way of life, for architects, urbanism is synonymous with urban design. I'd like to suggest that rather than thinking of this as a case of a word having multiple meanings, Wirth's argument denotes a shift in what is the proper object of urbanism. We can say so long to the drawings of Camillo Sitte and Daniel Burnham. After Wirth, a city's objects remain only important as symptoms: radically new ways of life developing within real urbanism. For their part, architects have paid no notice to this development. Even the most remarkable urban projects that these self-styled urbanists came up with in the latter half of the twentieth century—think, for example, of Archigram's Walking City, Alison and Peter Smithson's Berlin Hauptstadt, or OMA's Euralille—all suffered from object fixation.

Since Wirth's day, we have become even more urban. The last century began with less than 10 percent of the world's population living in cities, but this century began with over 50 percent living in cities. To continue to speak of an opposition between rural and urban is increasingly impossible. Prior to the dawn of cable and the Internet one had to go to the city to experience its culture. Today, the village is wired and one doesn't need to go to the city to learn of Woody Allen or Moby. Urbanism as a way of life penetrates the deepest reaches of the countryside. If a park like Yosemite is the epitome of nature, then surely the densities and heterogeneous populations of its tent cities make it an urban park. Similarly, where is technology, a marker of urbanity, more necessary for human life to exist than at the high camps of Mount Everest or the laboratories of the South Pole?

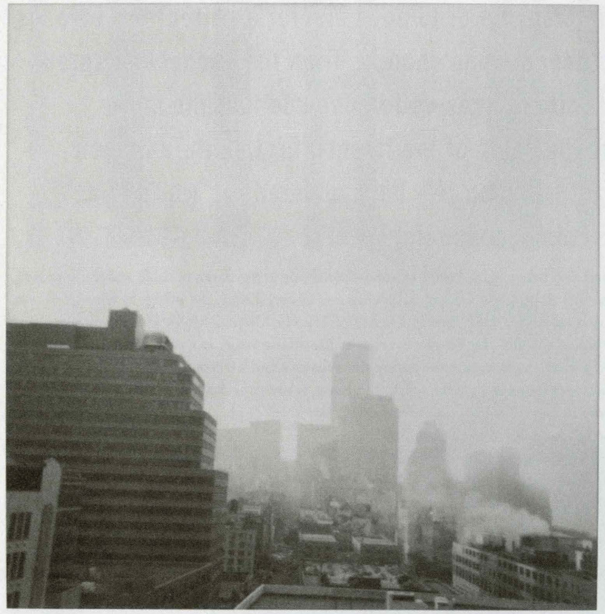
There is something distinctly post-metropolitan about this condition of urbanism everywhere. The metropolis depended on density and concentration but since the early '70s, more Americans have lived in suburbia than in the city. Already by the time Wirth was writing, the city itself had been redefined as a demographic entity: from the city's political boundaries to a larger metropolitan region. Today, large, sprawling, megalopolitan regions such as the Pearl River delta, the Atlantic corridor in the Northeast United States, or the Dutch Randstad, undo the notion of a city as a Manhattan-like, concentrated area. Above all, however, the city is no longer new. We are no longer newcomers to the urban world. If we can still manage to be alienated —and increasingly alienation seems so boring, so twentieth century—it is certainly not because the city shocks us. If we experience shock, it's because we go from a familiar to an unfamiliar urban experience: from Orange County to Los Angeles, from New York to Greenwich, from Stockholm to Hong Kong.

So what's an urbanist to do, then? With the end of the plan and the grand gesture, a new way of engaging urbanism is necessary.[3] I suspect that, given the conservative nature of the profession, architects will see the idea that urbanism as they knew it has come to an end as a pessimistic argument. This seems rather bizarre and nostalgic to me. More than anything, urbanism after the city makes it possible for architects to take on new, more exciting roles. Maybe they miss the Century Club. I say good riddance to the senior citizens of the avant-garde.

Urbanism is the province of the young, as yet unfettered by the shackles of compromise and tradition. Today, as the Baby Boom generation flees the real world to the New Age, the antique store, and endless reruns of *Woodstock: The Movie*, youth culture is reshaping urbanism as a way of life. Creator of the weblog, the rave, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, youth culture makes up all that is vital in urban culture.

What might, for want of a better term, might "teen urbanism" bring? For the rest of this essay, I'd like to take a look at the work of young designers who are undertaking radically innovative approaches to urbanism.

Let's begin with what would appear to be the most traditional approach to teen urbanism. The WOS 8 (Warme Overdracht Station 8), is designed by NL architects and built in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in the late '90s. A heat transfer station, WOS 8 will eventually take waste heat from a power plant and redistribute it to 11,000 future dwellings that will eventually engulf it. As an infrastructural element, WOS 8 has to precede the construction of those dwellings. For now, it lies surrounded by fields and sheep, soon to be rezoned as building land. The building's lifespan, then, would inevitably be that of an invader: a harbinger of a future displacement of the sheep and later on as a mysterious infrastructural element. Thus, NL eliminated any



contextualist reference to present or future architecture in the area. With no real inhabitable or public space in the program, NL architects focused on its wrapping. Since the building would be a potential target for vandalism left to fend for itself, NL covered the building in an indestructible polyurethane coating. But the building will also make friends: a climbing wall invites kids to test themselves against the building gently, as does a giant hole and a basketball hoop. Finally, when water runs over the building's contoured surfaces, it creates odd effects.

Apart from engaging the teen vandals who will inevitably visit it, WOS 8 acts as teen urbanism because it rejects any possibilities for a master plan, or even for knowing what the future will bring. Like the monolith from 2001, the building will always be at odds with its environment, as different from the world of suburban homes as it is from the sheep pasture. Instead, like an André the Giant sticker, a cryptic T-shirt logo, or a pair of sneakers thrown over telephone wires, WOS 8 hints at a secret symbolic order that may or may not be real. Time will tell if NL will create more objects in this language, but, one suspects that WOS 8 will generate its own meaning in the clandestine maps of the city that the young make.

In his design work, Phillipe Starck undertakes a similar form of appeal to stealth urbanism. A bit older than the rest of the designers I'm looking at, Starck is still a Leftist, disapproving of materialism and consumption, but he believes that for the moment, its impossible to break society's addictions. For Starck, denial is a mistake. Instead, he says, we should realize that the twenty-first century will be the first century of the immaterial: there will be no more need to possess to enjoy. With the end of materialism, it will be possible for Love to evolve freely.

But Starck is a designer, creating objects to sell in the market. Like X-Large T-shirts, Starck's designs allow members of a scattered tribe to recognize each other. Starck's target audience, he explains, are "Mutants in a Mutating Society." Understanding Starck as the creator of a way of life, rather than as the designer of a series of discreet objects allows us to redefine urbanism for the post-material millennium. This form of urbanism is no longer limited to a particular or country but rather is something we can find scattered throughout the global city.

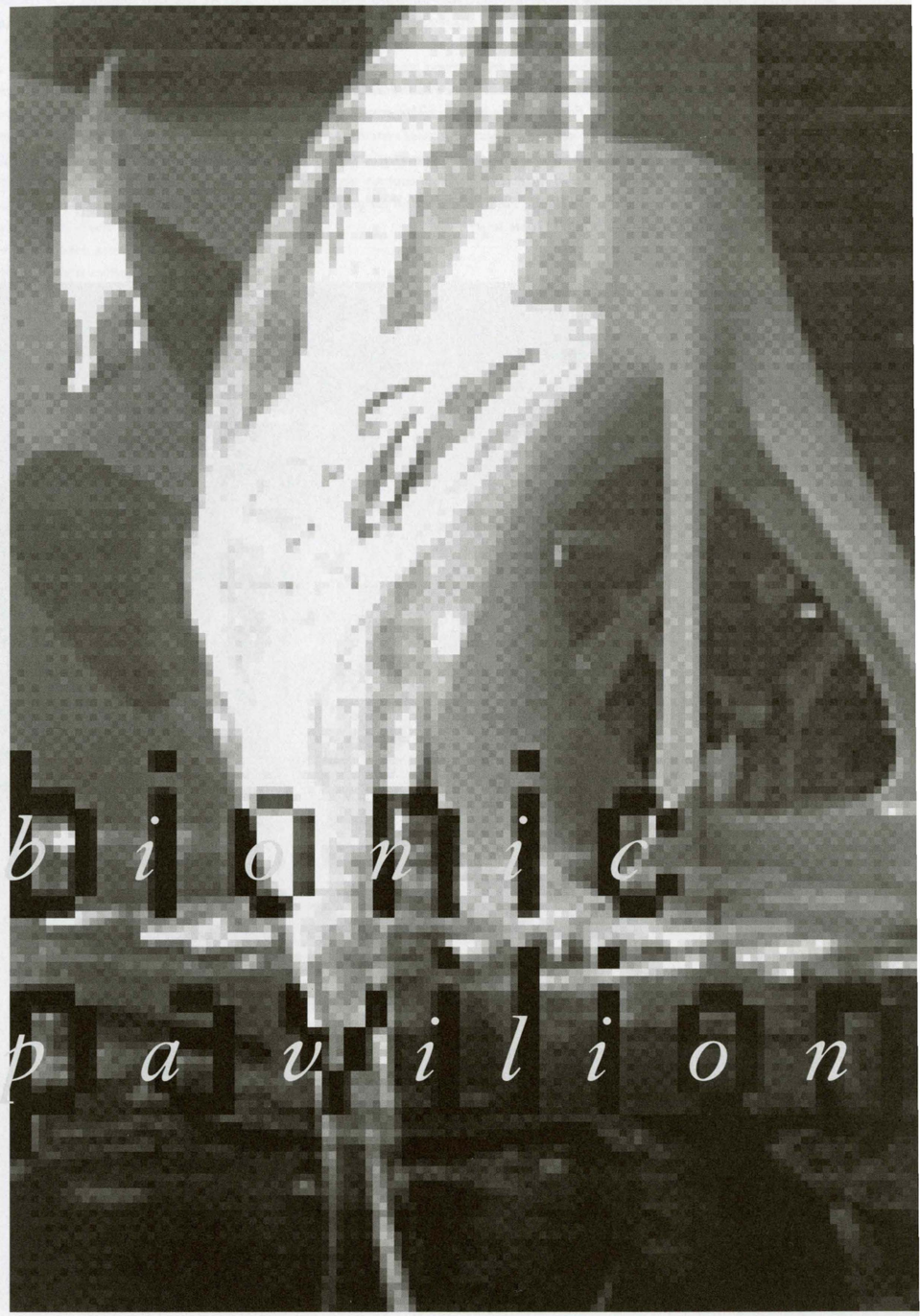
Similarly, in Dayware, a line of clothing created by Joe Day, an architect who practices with the Hedge Collective in Los Angeles, clothing becomes urbanism. Dayware is clothing for young, urban dwellers who identify themselves with desig culture. Offering an array of simple, practical and stylishly informal clothes Daywar for now at least, pointedly isn't available in the mall. Dayware sells its clothes at a 10 percent discount to anyone who claims to be an artist or designer. 10 percent of Since nobody checks, few customers fail to check the 10 percent discount box. Th result is that Dayware's customers become artists and urbanists themselves.

These three possibilities for teen urbanism—other examples, such as Israel Kandarian's designs for his Ministry of Architecture, Chip Minnick's SCI-Arc thesi on Nike Housing (in the latest issue of *Off-Ramp*), and even *Wallpaper* magazine and *loud paper*, also come to mind—allow us to foresee a time when we will all be aware of our roles as urbanists, no longer passively waiting for master planners to f things but instead actively reshaping the city as a way of life ■■

[1] *Tragically not because Koolhaas would associate himself with the Johnson, that wa predictable after I gave him a copy of my dissertation on Johnson's role as fascist sympathizer in the 1930s and power broker since the 1970s, but rather because one would think Koolhaas would have something better to do with his time.*

[2] *Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout* The City Reader, *2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1999), 97-105.*

[3] *Another important diagnosis of the end of the plan is by Manfredo Tafuri in his* Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development, *(Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1976). Tafuri, however, urged political activism as a respons In an argument that has been influential on this article, Michael Speaks has argued for th substitution of soft strategies for hard plans. See Michael Speaks,* Big Soft Orange, *1998.*



(loud paper)

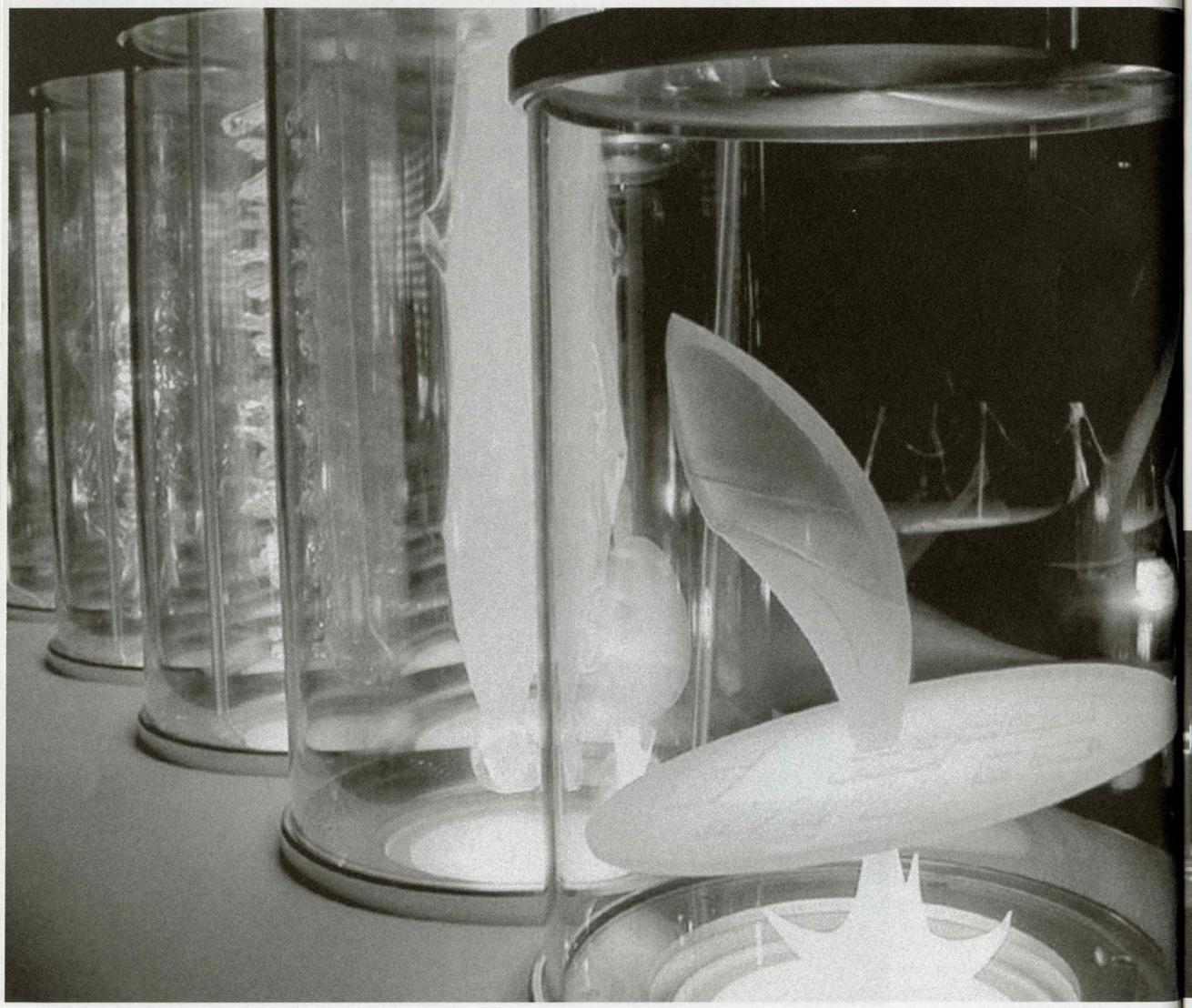
Q: *In the description of genetic architecture on the Web site, you write, "Some of the technological solutions mentioned in this initiative for genetic architecture are not yet capable of realistic implementation." Where do you think we (architects as builders as well as critical thinkers) are now in relation to "realistic implementation"? How much have you been able to implement at the* EXPO 2000 *Youth Pavilion?*

Q: EXPO 2000 *and the Bionic Pavilion seem to emphasize a biomorphic formal expression of genetic architecture. Could you tell us more about how biological models have influenced the designs? For instance, do you call on computational technology to implement biologically-derived generative formal systems (such as L-systems) and to merge them with other architectural concerns? Has* EXPO 2000 *undergone the same kinds of reiterative and evolutionary design strategies of the Bionic Pavilion? If the Bionic Pavilion is an ideal for genetic architecture, how closely does* EXPO 2000 *come to it?*

Dear *loud paper*,

A: We developed the theory of genetic architecture for the "Der visionaere Pavillon" as a proposal for the art exhibition, Dokumenta X, in 1997. As a free work we worked on the Case Study 1 the next year and presented the Konzept as a free proposal to the *EXPO 2000*. A Bionic Society saw it there and we decided together to work at a Bionic Pavilion for the *EXPO 2000*, using the claim Man, Nature, Technology.

A: This Project is the Case Study 2 as you can see in the genetic architecture-folder and on http://www.3deluxe.de. All the knowledge about the fusion between the computer technology and biology and all the inspirations from the sciences grew directly into the concept of the scape pavilion at the expo. The similarities in the form finding processes inspired us to draw on our understanding of static flow and we transferred these to our computer models in soft image.



Q: *If hardware is a metaphor for physical form, have you been able to design or include a genetic architecture of the software and data? In other words, have you similarly been able to address, for example, the spatial organization of the program, or demographic makeup of the occupants?*

Q: *"Genetic architecture" brings to mind several pioneers on the technology/architecture axis: Marcos Novice, John Frizzier, Karl Chu, Lars Spuybroek and Greg Lynn among others. Doing a Web search just to refresh my memory brought up a transcript of a Bartlett lecture by Manfred Wolff-Plottegg <<http://www.baukunst.tu graz.ac.at/~plottegg/vo991210e.htm> that seems to share your attitude as well. The drawing upon biology for inspiration also reminds me of Rene Thom, D'Arcy Thompson, Roger Caillois and even Sanford Kwinter. Where do you see your work in relation to the works of these people? For that matter, who else is out there now exploring likenesses of genetic architecture? Who else is currently working toward it from other disciplines (e.g. computation, physics, biology, economics)?*

Q: *Is listening to music an important part of your design process?*

Q: *How does youth culture affect your designs?*

Q: *Do you have favorite pop culture outlets? Magazines, MTV, etc.*

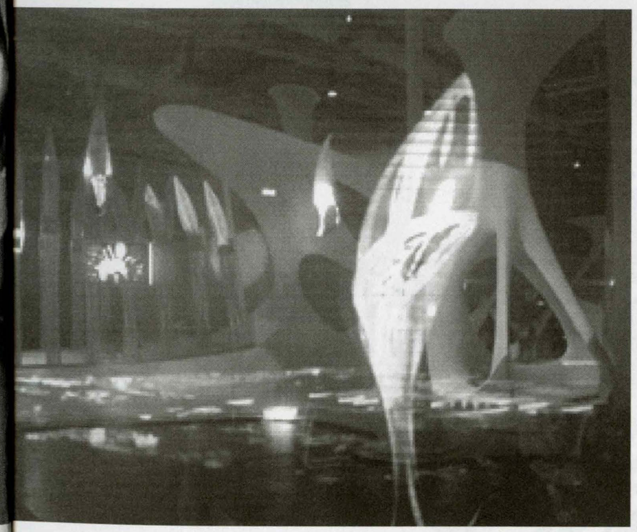
Q: *What's next in your genetic architecture plans?*

Q: *Ever been to Los Angeles? Las Vegas?*

Q: *Firm info? Names? Backgrounds? Ages?*

Q: *Favorite French intellectual?*

Q: *Ever thought about marketing the speech-recognizing letterforms to Berlitz?*



A: The company Moss, from Boston, saw our renderings at the expo and called us and told us that they really wanted to build this genetic architecture. And they did a great job. We transferred our DAT to their system and with a huge computer-controlled cutting table they generated the exact cutting to build our normally unbuildable forms. You'll reach a new genetic architecture site on www.visionscape.de. The site will be ready in the next days. On <<http://www.baukunst.tu graz.ac.at/~plottegg/vo991210e.htm>

A: I did not get any to connect but I'm really interested in all the people you recommended in your mail.

A: Music was and is still very important to our work. Every project has its own suitable style and ever since we began music and youth culture has influenced our projects. In a lot of projects we create a stylish "chilloutzone" without declaring it. (please have a look to the "memorylounge" at visionscape.)

A: But our projects are influenced in a liquid interface by science, music…I have been to Las Vegas only once a couple of years ago, but I keep an eye on that electric city. Maybe that place could be the place to be with our plans.

A: In 1993 I worked for Philippe Starck in Paris, but I didn't come and still don't come very much in touch with the scene of French intellectuals. I have been in LA a lot of times. I made four yearlong shootings for the German street-fashion label, Overlook (www.cyber-pirates.de). My brother lives there and I like the atmosphere at this very special city.

A: With Andreas and Stephan Lauhoff we founded 3 de luxe in 1991. After a couple of years our friend Dieter Brell stopped his own artist group, Adieu New York, and joined as the fourth member of 3 de luxe. He is 40; all the others are 34.

A: The speech-recognizing letterform was Andreas' degree at the St. Martins College in London. It was not developed for a commercial application. But if you see interesting possibilities please contact him at a.lauhoff@3deluxe.de.

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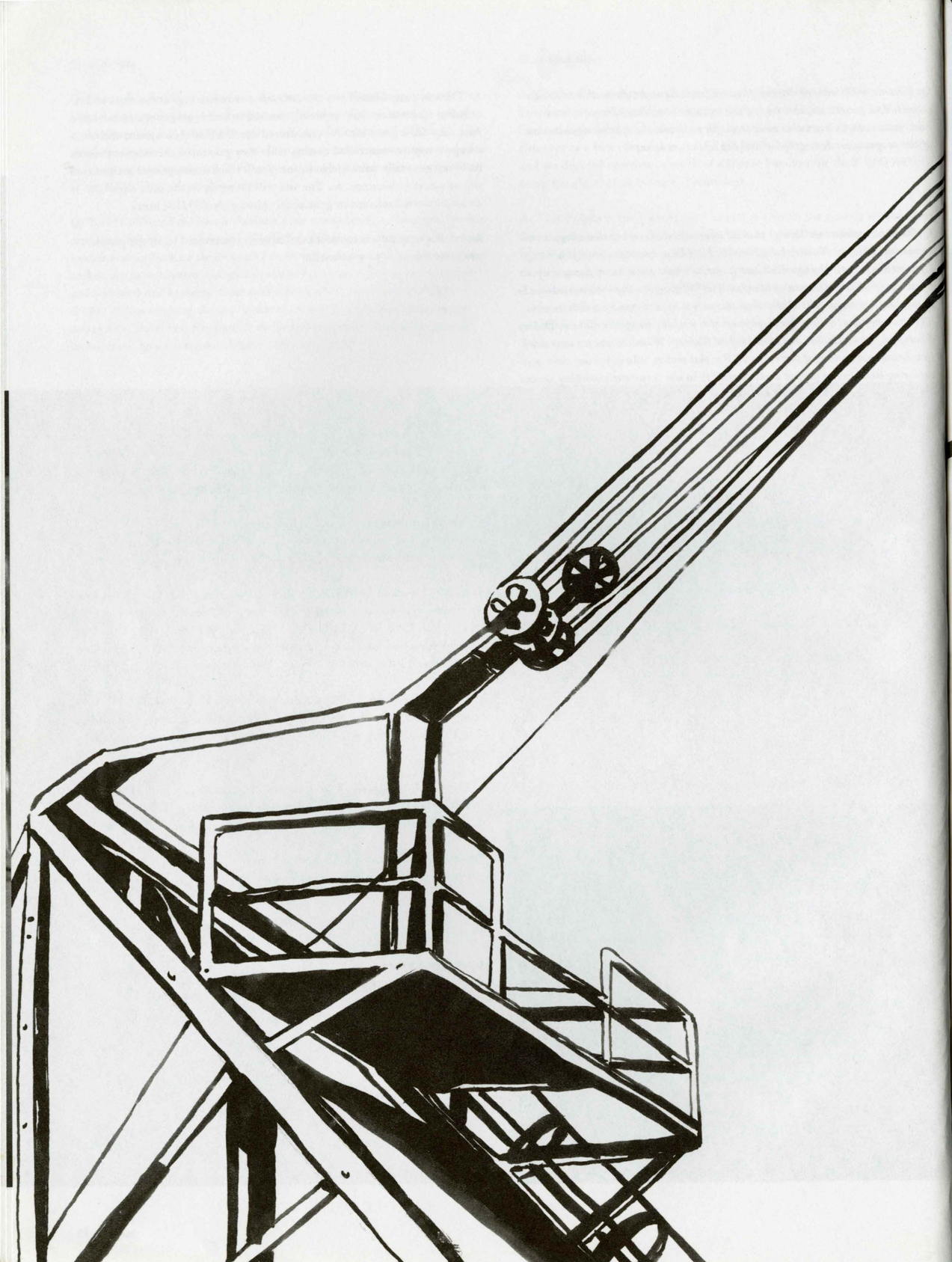
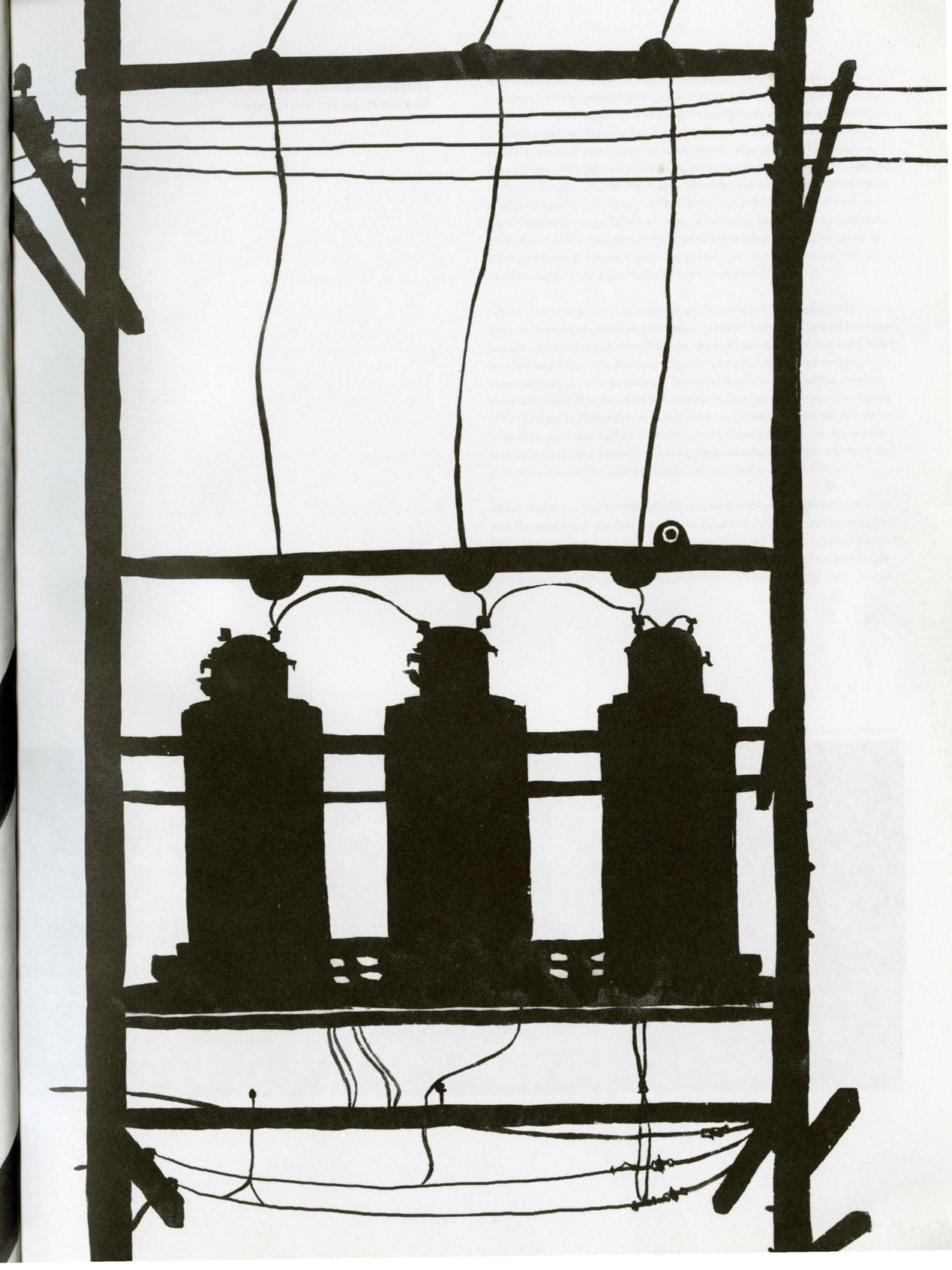
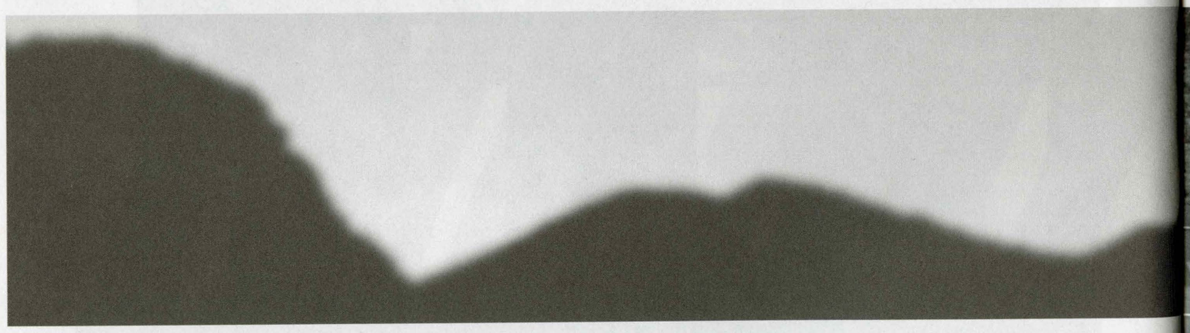




Judith Chafee, an Abandoned Modernism

Text and Photos by Chris Grimley

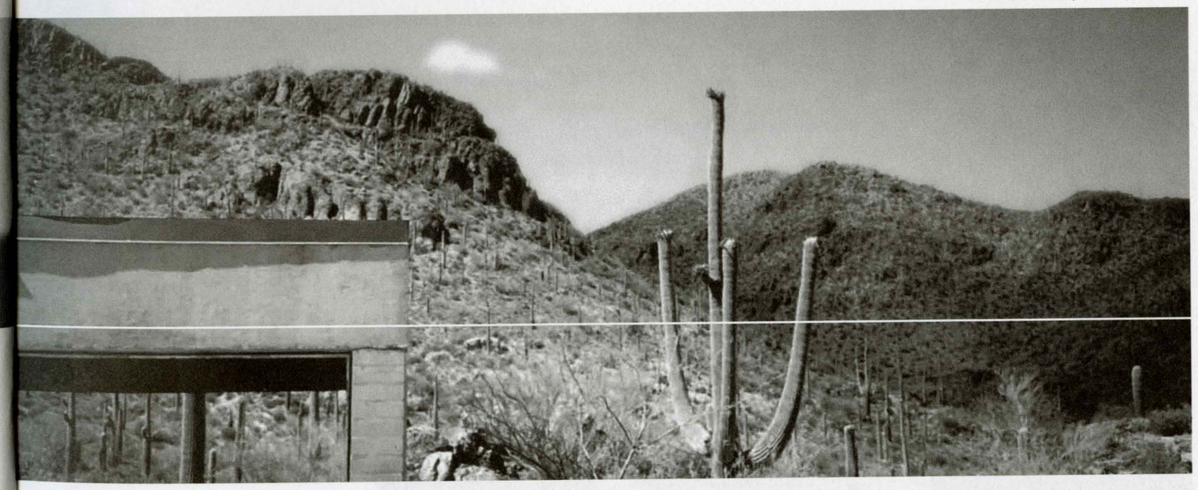


A few years ago the noted and well-reported death of Albert Frey—proponent of Pop-modernism and architect-godfather of Palm Springs, California—was observed. For Frey, Palm Springs acted surreptitiously as testing ground zero for his postwar, *überriche* modernism. Although formally aligned with elements of modernity emerging in Los Angeles, Frey's vision was filtered through an ironic sensibility that became specific to this particular oasis in the desert. His wry comments on the production of architecture quoted and distilled from Le Corbusier's *Five Points*—under whose tutelage Frey had been prior to his immigration—and the playfulness of his own peculiar brand of regionalism can be localized in his own House 2, where a rock—apparently of its own will—sacrifices itself to support the glass wall of Frey's living room.

Albert Frey's modernism is rooted in an America that believed in the Dream: it was a time when suburbia was a place just like Palm Springs and Formica installed Boomerang in every kitchen; when Frank Sinatra could hold court in a house designed by Richard Neutra; when the chances of running into superstardom at the supermarket increased hand-in-hand with a development mentality. It is therefore not surprising that in an era when the illusion of the Dream is played out in sentimental image-saturated media that those who champion that earlier time bring with them a certain pre-fabricated nostalgia, making a place for a young Swiss immigrant to rise and become part of a nation's lore and signifying the attainability of the Dream.

What was not noted by this culture obsessed with post-bachelor-pad irony was the passing of another significant figure of American modernism. One who may not have possessed the star-studded status of Albert Frey, but who had equal amounts of bravado and machismo entrenched in her own particular take on the American desert. Judith Chafee—who passed

Gates Pass House, Tuscon, Arizona



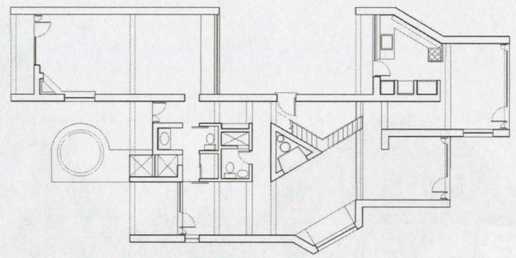
away in November 1998 at the age of 65—grew up in the deserts of Arizona, went East to attend Yale and emerged on the architecture scene at the height of this period of optimistic American modernism. Judith practiced on the East Coast for a number of years, most notably in the office of Edward Larrabee Barnes and did time at the American Academy in Rome alongside Charles Eames. When confronted by the implications and formal reductions of the new "historical architecture" beginning to dominate the practices of many of her contemporaries, she returned to the desert, settling once again in Tucson, Arizona. It was there that she continued to practice her own brand of modernism, one that borrowed both from the mythology of the land she inhabited and the hard truth of the desert climate—one as unforgiving as it is beautiful. While Judith's work does not share in the Pop sensibilities that Frey was so fond of, it does share roots in the modern project.

Chafee's work stands in sharp contrast to the work of her contemporaries, particularly to the overt mannerism of the early East Coast–domestic post-modern architecture that was under construction as she returned to Arizona in 1970, such as Robert Venturi's Brant House, and Michael Grave's Alexander House. It is her practice, which the University of British Columbia Architecture Chair Chris Macdonald has termed "an unreconstructed modernism," that strikes one as being with purpose, without pretense and without the sculptural symbolism that many of these other works took as their mantra. "To have made such fine work in the face of such a powerful cultural force (as Postmodernism)—and this in an environment where a forthright and passionate woman would be patronized as a matter of course—represents an accomplishment of singular determination," Macdonald writes of two of Chafee's houses. On first encounter it is tempting to categorize this work as regional—it takes its surroundings as fact, not as mannerist means of producing form or simply acting in opposition to an emerging culture of surface and historical reference. Yet the notion of a tectonic is largely absent in her work. In fact the details that are present slyly subvert the assumption that materials have a proper way to be deployed in a building. This is particularly surprising because on first glance the materiality and organization of her work is so clear. Through her practice, Chafee consistently proposes that the politics of a regional practice do not have to refer back to the manner and tradition of building and place in itself in order to find capable means of expression. Neither does it need to become invested in a populist understanding of "style." For Chafee the main thrust was always a dedication to the roots of modernism.

Her Gates Pass house first strikes you as being out of sync with other architecture that was being built in the year of its construction 1979: it somehow seems *older*. Fabricated of concrete block and concrete beams, with subtle steel-mullioned windows, the seemingly rectilinear form of the house easily could be mistaken as being constructed more than 20 years earlier. The house rises out of the rocky desert surrounding it and recalls the nearby rock formations that shield it from the adjacent road. Closer inspection reveals that the rectilinear character of the home is undone by the central figure of a triangular fireplace that rises through the center of the main room, a formal device that Chafee used in many of her projects. This form separates the main area of the house into a living room, guestroom and bathing areas. A staircase zigzags around the chimney to the open guestroom. The flue itself maintains other functions, both radiantly heating the house through the winter months and, via a process of convection, alleviating heat during the dry hot summers. The flues, carefully placed in both the upper and lower walls, allow for a wide variety of conditions to be accommodated through opening and closing. A small kitchen is wrapped around the north end of the house, leading toward the front entrance and main bedroom.

Given the nature of the climate, the materials are left exposed: an untreated wood ceiling softening the relative hardness of the other concrete block walls. In place of wood support beams, cast concrete spans the distance between the walls. This simultaneously subverts our expectations of a wood beam while giving a semblance of tonal continuity to both the interior and exterior surfaces of the structure. Throughout the house the modern tradition of material—one that favors a right placement and moment for any given element—is played against type. The concrete beams and concrete block walls would be expected in a commercial structure contradict our assumptions in this type of residential application. In fact, the "coolness" of the material is undone by the thermal function that they serve in the project—the hollowness of the block acting literally as heat containers—and the elementary belief of modern architecture merging with its landscape is inverted by the landscape itself. Cycles of heating, cooling and time of day are reflected in the abstracted mass of the building itself.

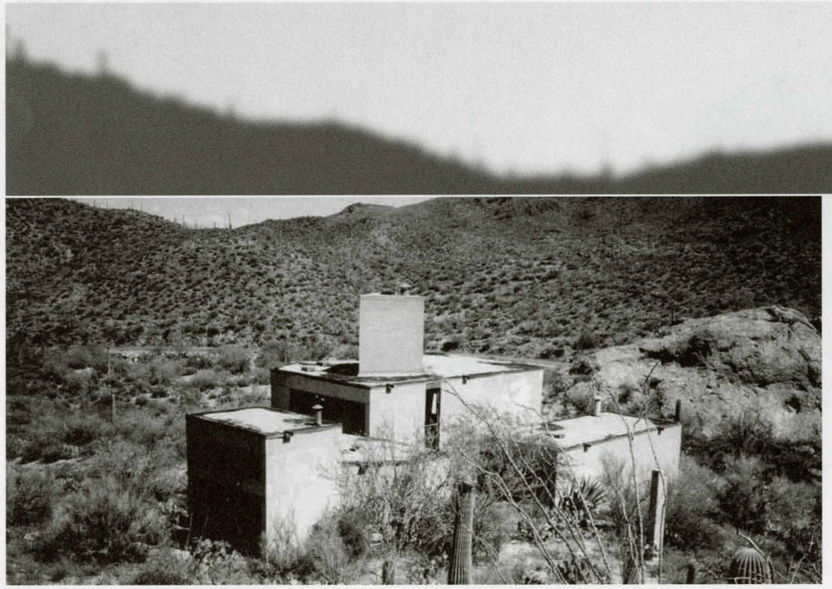
After the first year of my Masters degree, I visited Chafee during her last summer. I was unclear as to the intentions of my assignment, believing that we were to go down to Arizona and measure a few of her houses for the purpose of constructing models for an exhibition we were organizing of her work. It was my first trip to the Southwest, Los Angeles and the desert. I had yet to really grasp the importance of the Southwest's contribution to the durability of modernism. I was not yet familiar with the cataloging of this era's work by Esther McCoy and only cursorily so with the early attempts by R.M. Schindler and Richard Neutra to translate what had been a European phenomena to their newly adopted country. It was meeting Chafee, sharing an evening with her and a day at the house that really opened my eyes to an enduring legacy that wasn't primarily based in its current fashion status. This house condensed all of the reading that I had done that year into a single, physical artifact. And as I stood in the now abandoned house, I observed the walls covered with graffiti, all of the windows smashed out and began to understand that this was all part of a larger legacy. Even in its current state, the house could still begin to describe all of its author's intentions, and these intentions were critical to my own cultural legacy. This was an architect working at the apex of her capabilities. And this is how she should be remembered ■▮



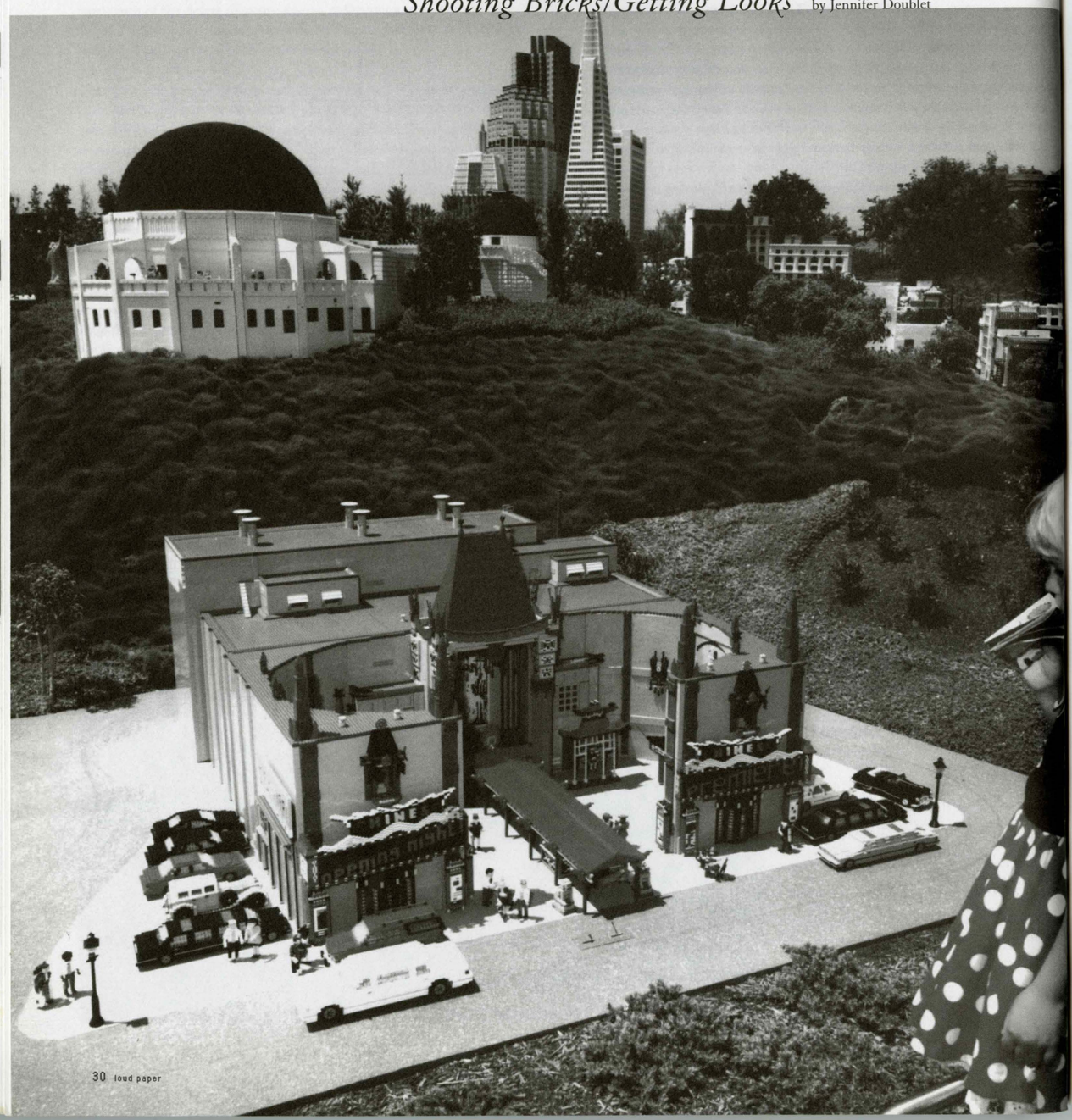
Postscript:

Sadly, from what I have been told, the house was recently leveled. Despite it's listing as an historical artifact, the house was seen as interfering with the seasonal migrations of the various desert inhabitants, and the location within the confines of a National Park have led to its destruction.

Gates Pass House, Tuscon, Arizona



Shooting Bricks/Getting Looks by Jennifer Doublet



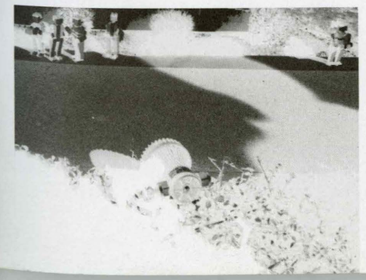
Roger Minick's color photographs of Legoland, recently on view at the Jan Kresner Gallery in Los Angeles seduce the viewer with their compounded and reflected layering of surveillance. These captured acts of tourism, presented as brightly colored voyeuramas frame selected views with a heightened sensibility to scale, site and confrontation. Kresner's genius here lay in his ability to juxtapose a number of scale-shifting oddities that are easily missed on an actual visit. In person, the shear quantity, size and variety of brickettes and their architectural expression is so astounding that one's ability to take in the larger spectacle is quite impaired.

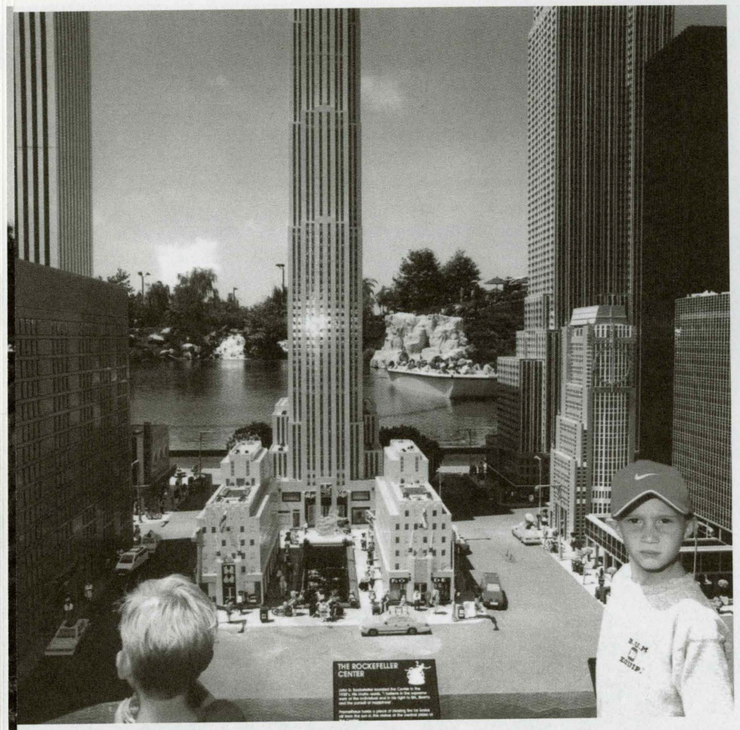
Three images are of particular relevance for this discussion: *Grauman's Chinese Theater, White House* and *Boys at Rockefeller Center*. All three represent cornerstones of American popular culture from entertainment to politics to business. And all three images successfully orchestrate an array of issues into provocative compositions.

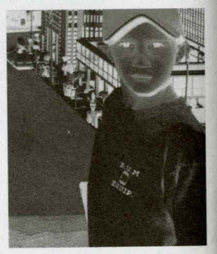
In *Grauman's Chinese Theater, Hollywood* stargazing becomes hyper-surreal. The miniature film premiere that unfolds in the middle-ground at the theater is, for instance, not observed by throngs of fans, but only by one giant in the foreground: an attentive blond kindergartner dressed in Minnie Mouse regalia. The iconographic building has, alas, fallen like Dorothy's whirling-dervish farm-house into a land of outsized munchkins with stars in their eyes and dots on their dresses. From Shirley Temple and Elizabeth Taylor to Drew Barrymore, the Olson Twins and Curly Sue of Pepsi ad stardom, this fan is not only a viewer but a vessel, a place holder and a stand-in for the Hollywood child star dream machine.

All the while, looming in the background is the great black eye of the Griffith Park Observatory. The dome, sits majestically like an otherworldly meteor on a grand pedestal, acting as a kind of architectural omen for the riskier business at hand in Hollywood. Rebel stars with or without causes may lie concretely in the tiles at Grauman's but the real and celluloid volatility of celebrity is much more loosely set.

In the *White House*, the artist himself is captured on film as in shadowy profile in the foreground. This figure, as shadow, is strategically situated for a virtual worm's eye view of the political structures and underpinnings in our nation's capital. Like the child in the first picture, the shadow becomes a kind of referent, in this case, to the political observer, informant, participant. Is he the still undivulged source-the deep throat of Woodward and Bernstein notoriety, or simply an unknown ghostwriter of presidential speeches. Perhaps he's a behind-the-scenes campaign organizer of the James Carville type or maybe he's just all that's left of Hunter S. Thompson's fear and loathing.







On more solid ground, two spotlights hidden in the landscape direct the composition. They point to the center like weighty telescopic lenses at a sports event or super-sized director's blow-horns ready to holler "action." On a landing, a gaggle of Lego figurine tourists looks back at the artist. Squinting against the spotlights, one plastic man seems to be holding his own camera. In this way he playfully mimics, even taunts the photographer's role.

Lastly, the exhibition scene-stealer, *Boys at Rockefeller Center*, brings the photographer's position full circle. He is no longer the peripheral, hovering child observer of the first image, or the political shadow in the second. Here he is confronted point blank by one boy's unflinching and piercing stare. This look is so sharp that it doesn't even pause for breath as it slices right through the artist. In fact, the child's glare cuts directly out the frame into our space like a hot knife in cold butter. Further the sun's reflection, or photographer's flash on the building tower, like the boat filled with passing tourists in the pool beyond, add to the mounting defiance of unwanted inquiries. As such, they too successfully bounce the looking-glass lens right back into the viewer's court.

Perhaps the verdict on voyeurism at play in these images lies in the eye of the beholder. In any case, the surprising frankness with which these photos explore looking at Legoland suggests a refreshing take on American amusements and pose larger questions as to boundaries and appropriateness on a hot summer day in the land that Lego built ■■

photos by Roger Minick courtesy of Jan Kresner Gallery

LEGO: A MACHINE FOR LIVING

by William McNaughton

JUST IMAGINE HAVING TWO MILLION LEGOS!

The one fascinating thing about the Legoland theme park in Southern California is Miniland. The two-million Lego bricks compose a mini-world composed from five different cities in the United States. There are two other Legoland theme parks, one in Billund, Denmark, home of the Lego Group, and in Windsor, England. The small and simultaneously giant Lego structures immediately bring me back to my childhood, when I dreamed of building giant structures with an endless supply of Lego bricks. Compared to an actual building, the models in Legoland are quite small, built at 1:20 scale. However, by the imagination's standard of measurement, they are enormous—the completed fantasies of a small boy.

These modular bricks can become almost anything: the Statue of Liberty, the Chrysler Tower, among a few. But how can square bricks become the Statue of Liberty? It's all just a matter of scale, just zoom in on a photograph on a computer and its all square blocks. The Lego brick transcends itself and becomes part of a greater whole. So as not to offend the Postmodernists, let's just say that the simple block design is more than meets the eye. In fact, you can combine six eight-stud bricks of the same color together in 102,981,500 ways. This is the genius of the Lego system. It is what kept my friends and me busy for so many hours. Unfortunately, the original Lego patent was too brilliant from a sales point of view. As soon as you have a small number of bricks there are almost endless combinations of ways to put them together, who needs to buy more?

And if you have saturated the market with 203,000,000,000 Lego bricks since 1949, what do you do? You create demand. How do you create demand? Boredom! You can't have fascinated, busy, inspired children. They need to be bored and at the same time be filled with the idea that fulfillment is just around the corner with the next Lego adventure.

I was recently in Toys-R-Us looking for a Lego set for my soon-to-be niece and could not find the standard sets that I played with as a kid. Now, all the sets are small and highly specific. Everything is themed from *Star Wars* sets to arctic adventures. Directions are included to show you the correct way to assemble

the pieces. You follow the directions and get something like the picture on the box. After that it's on to the next set. It seems that Lego is pulling the old bait and switch at the Legoland site. You are shown the promise of unlimited possibilities in Miniland, but sold the limitations of the specialized set.

Is it possible that the modular Lego brick or the modular unit in general could somehow be more freeing or expansive than free expression? In an ideal world, this is not possible, but in the real world with limited resources (capital, time, labor) it just might work. Basically, the question is: Can a modular system give you more freedom than something that is totally custom (considering limited resources)? I'll tell you what I think but I would like to hear what you think (see email address below). I have an interesting example of a building that seems like an expression of total freedom but actually looks like it is based on a modular system. I was modeling Fallingwater in my computer out of digital Lego bricks for a project that is entirely another discussion. But, to make the story short, the Lego model almost perfectly matched the drawings of the actual Kaufman House in Bear Run, Pennsylvania, give or take a few inches. Was Frank Lloyd Wright secretly playing with Legos?

It seems like the Lego system or a similar modular system would be perfect for creating housing solutions. The current archaic methods of designing and building housing are wasteful, expensive and inefficient. Can you imagine buying a car from a custom car designer? After they custom design the car for you, possibly even design a new prototype engine, build study models and then hire everyone to manufacture the design, your new car costs 10 million dollars. Does anyone feel that a Mercedes is less of a car because it is mass-produced and only costs 40 thousand dollars? As Le Corbusier wrote in *Towards a New Architecture*, "the problem of the house has not yet been stated." And it appears to be as true today, 80 years later. The car has dramatically improved since the '20s, but has the house? No.

The reason is almost too simple: the problem of the car has been well-stated while the house has not. After the problem is stated, rules and standards are established and competition comes violently into play. Can a modular system like Legos be free enough to allow for individual expression but have enough rules and standards to truly allow for experimentation, study, theory, competition, efficiency and ultimately the advancement of the practice or profession of architecture?

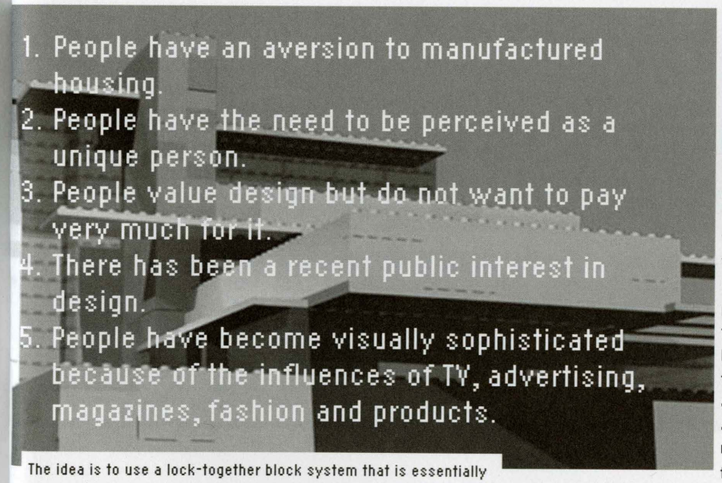
Unfortunately, architects have always seen themselves as individual creators, long after modernism has passed. Architects still behave as individuals. Although, they no longer name practices after themselves, instead going with more vague titles (Cor-Tex, OMA, COA) to show the world that they have renounced modernism. Even large firms should be looked at as individual entities—0no meaningful exchange or cooperation between architects exists, no thought of being part of a group or profession. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is an expensive farce. At some point architecture left the ranks of the "profession" and became a hobby.

The dictionary lists architecture as a profession right next to medicine. But let's take medicine as an example. Medicine advances mainly because of the scientific method, a system in which a problem is stated, rules are established and the idea is tested. After the medical community has extensively tested the idea and it cannot be disproved it is accepted as a theory. None of this happens in architecture, architects work as insolated individuals. There seems to be no interest in creating a collective, concrete and testable knowledge. If you look at the AIA website, the perfect place to begin a discussion about the state of architecture, the site filled with sketches by the group's members on their last Paris trip. This certainly looks more like a hobby than a profession.

No one is willing to take the risk of stating "the problem of the house." Of course this makes sense because why would the architect—the great thinker and shaper of civilization—reduce the vast and complex issues of dwelling to such a simple and specific level. And secondarily in the academic community there is fear that the cultural elite will cast out anyone who suggests ideas that don't have a currently in vogue intellectual defense. Ironically, we need to reduce the ideas of architecture to the level of product design in order for it to rise again to a level of social importance.

I would like to start a discussion on "the problem of the house." While I am talking about modular solutions, you must understand that these ideas can also exist in parallel to many other conflicting ideas. It's just one more product in the market. Track housing (the closest thing to manufactured housing) already exists next to avant-architecture. I also realize that there are many flaws in my arguments, but that is the precisely the reason to begin a wider discussion of this subject. My ideas fail to look at issues of the street, the town and other urban issues, but my point is to play the ideas through, test them and see if their solutions confront the relevant issues.

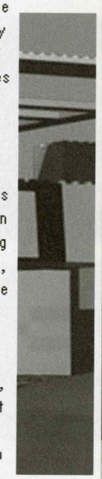
Every idea is based on certain assumptions and for the purpose of argument these are mine.


1. People have an aversion to manufactured housing.
2. People have the need to be perceived as a unique person.
3. People value design but do not want to pay very much for it.
4. There has been a recent public interest in design.
5. People have become visually sophisticated because of the influences of TV, advertising, magazines, fashion and products.

The idea is to use a lock-together block system that is essentially the same as Legos, but with a scale change. The roof/floor system would carry all the electrical, HVAC, gas and water systems. By setting an exact reproducible standard, it will allow competition to enter the market and increase quality by using current manufacturing methods. There are already standards for building, but because of their inexact nature costs can only be reduced so far and the quality of construction is unreliable. Currently, buildings are overbuilt because of the inability to reproduce test results. Through quality, precision, design and cost as well as the marketing and advertising efforts of companies, I believe the first problem—people's aversion to manufactured housing—would be alleviated. Companies like Sony, Nike, Gap, Mercedes, or any company that believes lifestyle is important in the sale of their products and image would quickly turn the public opinion.

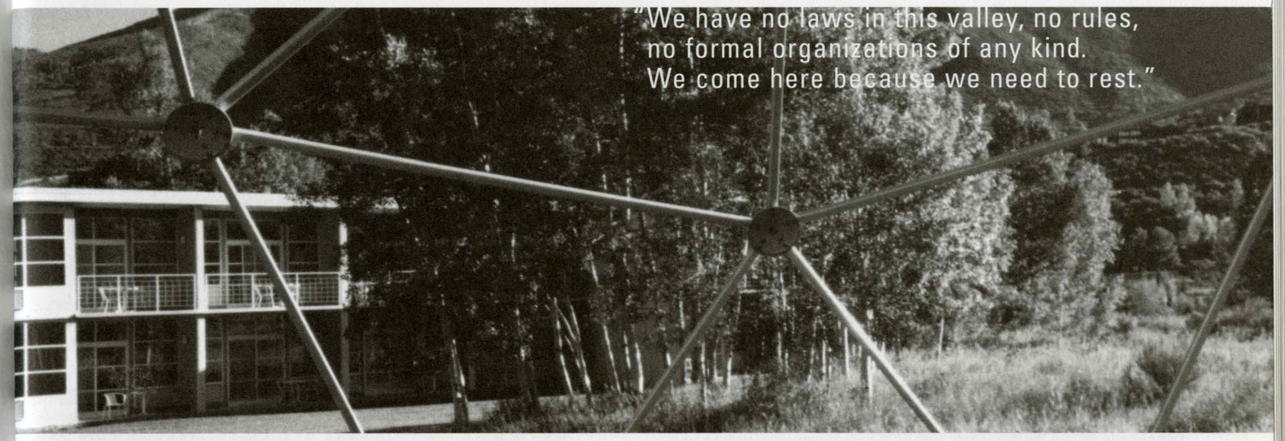
Individualism: it seems to be the mantra of our time all Americans own manufactured cars, clothing, electronics, watches, furniture and somehow still maintain their individuality. Just like the Lego bricks, all these products can be combined in almost unlimited ways to maintain peoples sense of individuality. By creating standards in the housing industry different companies can produce their own unique version of the structure and more likely the interior. Competing companies would make kitchens, bathrooms, entertainment systems, the working components of the house. Sony may only be interested in creating entertainment modules, Mercedes may want to do entire houses, with different options for different price points, just like there auto line. 300,400,500,600 series houses. This modular attitude also allows for upgrades. Get in with the base model and upgrade without moving. By spreading the design costs of one design over the entire production run, builders can provide customers with great design at affordable prices. The third, fourth, and fifth assumptions easily follow from this approach. Everything I think and say is affected by the influences of television, advertising, magazines and fashion. By taking an approach like this modular design idea, a new aesthetic is also created which plays into the current aesthetics of our lives, what we see and hear everyday. Current housing solutions seem to be more out of place than these ideas. What do you think?

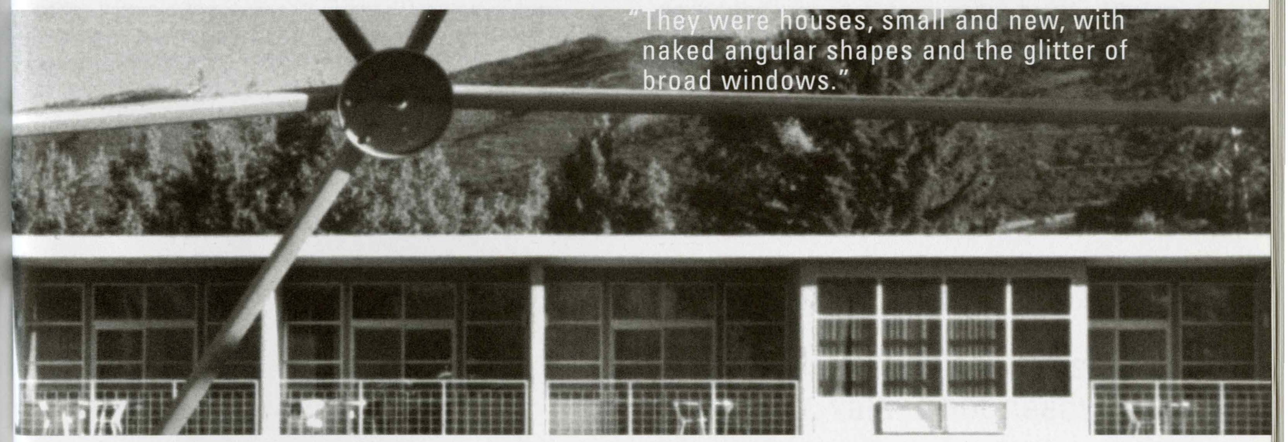
will@sciarc.edu



SIEDLUNG SHRUGGED "What is this Place?"

Text and Photos by Jennifer Doublet
Excerpts from *Atlas Shrugged* Ayn Rand





In scenic northwest Aspen, Colorado, sits an unlikely example of the Bauhaus-inspired "International Style"—the Aspen Institute at Aspen Meadows. Here in 1950, Walter Paepcke, Chair of the Container Corporation of America, founded the Institute as a broadly intellectual seminar campus, a place where world leaders and visiting scholars could convene to discuss "the complex social issues" facing the rapid world globalization. To build his dream, he hired Bauhaus graphics guru Herbert Bayer to design a minimalist project to house his world-class participants. It was to be a modernist American housing project constructed in the spirit of the German *Siedlungen* of the '20s.

"In Bayer's hands, the Aspen Meadows acres were to become a vast testing ground for Bauhaus ideas, a mountain-bound stage for the celebration of all that he learned as a student and teacher in his years at Weimar and Dessau," reads the Institute's publicity material. However taken Paepcke may have been with the simple, graphic lines of the Bauhaus style, the Aspen Institute program was a far cry from the socialist ideals that drove the early seidlung projects. "Worker" housing, as championed by the Frankfurt School, the Bauhaus clan or their modernist Viennese supporters, sought to economically, efficiently and hygienically situate the thousands post-W.W.I Europeans who were rapidly relocating to urban centers. Striping away decoration and relishing stark, "purist" forms, early modernists like Mies van der Rohe, Adolf Loos, Walter Gropius and Ernst May hoped to challenge and redefine the modern family's lifestyle through design. The most enduring American translation of such projects as the Weissenhof Seidlung was pure style. What we find at Bayer's Institute is "Modern" only in its general aesthetic; it is a capitalist retreat along Bauhaus design theme.

Today, the place is an ode to mid-century ideals as fueled by the booming American economy of that time, liberally dotted with European imports. Visitors can sit back in Bertoia chairs, feet propped on Breuer nesting tables and spend the afternoon gazing at Aspen Mountain. The mountain is roundly echoed in the curve of a Buckminster Fuller-esque half-dome perched ignominiously in the campus yard. With dangling limbs and suffering from general disrepair, the tetrahedron structure looks more like an abandoned jungle gym than an icon of a twentieth-century credo.

"There is no limit to what's possible here."

During my stay at the Institute, Henry Kissinger was the keynote speaker for an American multinational real estate development firm. Although the firm handles some of the largest plots of open land remaining in capital cities throughout Europe, Asia, North and South America, no one attending their annual round-table seemed to notice the furniture, the architecture or the campus plan. What did captivate the commercial real-estate tycoons to be were the wanderings of Kissinger's mind. Like a Tibetan monk's chant, Mr. Kissinger's deep and gravely voice silenced his listeners. His every observation, personal, political or economic hung in the air like proverbial pearls, hovering in the space just above the developer's heads and the ceiling of Bayer's auditorium.

Although attractive, the Aspen Siedlungen are not wildly remarkable. The guest quarters are comfortable and executed with clear-headed design sense. They exhibit front-to-back cross-ventilation systems, high ceilings, outstanding views and individual private patios. The primary color accent scheme on the exterior walls, which seems more "retro-form" than reasoned content, underscores that the building is a pastiche of Bauhaus clichés. The colors do not distinguish unit from unit nor building from building. They do not act as signage or markers or individualizing segregators in any way. They're simply decoration.

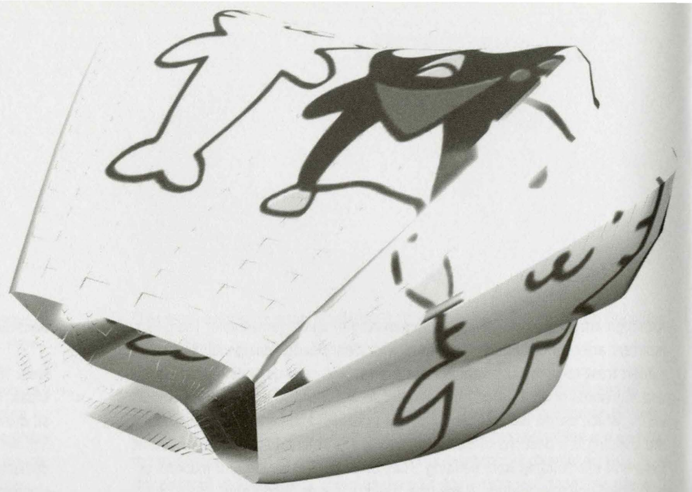
The steel pipe support tube and projecting planes of the entrance canopies are straightforward cut and paste examples of neatly trimmed moments from Gropius' Dessau student housing building. Gropius' 1926 *Principals of Bauhaus Production*, may have emphasized "the limitation to characteristic, primary forms and colors, readily accessibly to everyone," yet the quasi-fervor of Bayer's application of these forms to his units is precisely what promotes a "themed" reading of the project. One half expects the Institute's staff to sport worker's jackets and severely bobbed hairdos.

The Bauhaus in Dessau is a long way away from Aspen in time and space, and in economic and political reality. The questionable relationship between the two has been further stretched by the applied pragmatism of Bayer. He, like Gropius at Harvard, was, above all, a deft propagandist. With the aid of Frank Lloyd Wright-trained local architect Fritz Benedict and Paepcke's generous payrolls, Bayer was happy to oblige his client with a stylized Bauhaus aesthetic suited to an upscale American business dream.

From 1950 onward the Goethe Festival for great books, its sister festival for Music, the International Design Conference and the Photography Conference all drew luminaries from the arts, literature, politics and business. Albert Schwietzer, Darius Milaud, Richard Neutra, Charles Eames, George Nelson, Buckminster Fuller, Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange were all program participants in the Institute's first two. Like the characters in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, who retreat to their valley of Atlantis, these real life players came together in the idyllic valley to advance in a spirit of optimism and faith, believing good design to be good business.

Rand's novel, as a rambling capitalist epic, is unabashed in its pursuit to promote her objectivist philosophy. Politics and propaganda are housed in the bodies of characters and the tone of their conversations. Idealist and visionary entrepreneurs parade through the novel at will, unfettered by sentiment and society. Slowly and determinedly they are eventually sifted into a neat and rather self-satisfied little group who come and go in the hidden valley of Atlantis. While Rand's protagonists withdraw from the society which they protest, Paepcke and Bayer to attempted to change the world through a marriage of commerce and culture. In September 1999, the players who'd rented the Institute wanted little more than for Mr. Kissinger to outline the political and economic land-mines that might hinder them in their quest for financial returns—design culture a cliché left over from another era ■■

"...here we trade in achievements not failure, values not needs."



MOA:HOME

by Israel

read me

What's it all about? The MOA:HOME collection is a line of products for and about a demographic other than the wealthy patron of traditional architectural practice. The MOA:HOME client is the skateboarder from Orange County, CA (a position we take both out of sentiment for our own desires, as well as from segmented market research). MOA:HOME offers scalar devices including t-shirts (available at Fred Segal, Melrose [upstairs] and www.archinect.com), hyper- skin furniture, toolsheds and collectible house components. The surfaces of the MOA:HOME collection are inspired by the super-architectural space created through the bodily processes of the modern skateboarder engaging an appropriated urban landscape. Disclaimer: Any information attatched or enclosed with this transmittal are for information purposes only. The Ministry of Architecture offers no warranty and accept no liability whatsoever arising out of, or in connection with, the use or misuse of this data.

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The Ministry of Architecture-Ministry of Design [MOA-MOD] is an international, multi-disciplinary design collective, founded in 1999 at the Southern California Institute of Architecture [SCI-Arc] by Magnus Hierta [Los Angeles USA], Israel Kandarian [Los Angeles USA], Tamas Jones [Melbourne AUS], and Dominic Balmforth [London UK].

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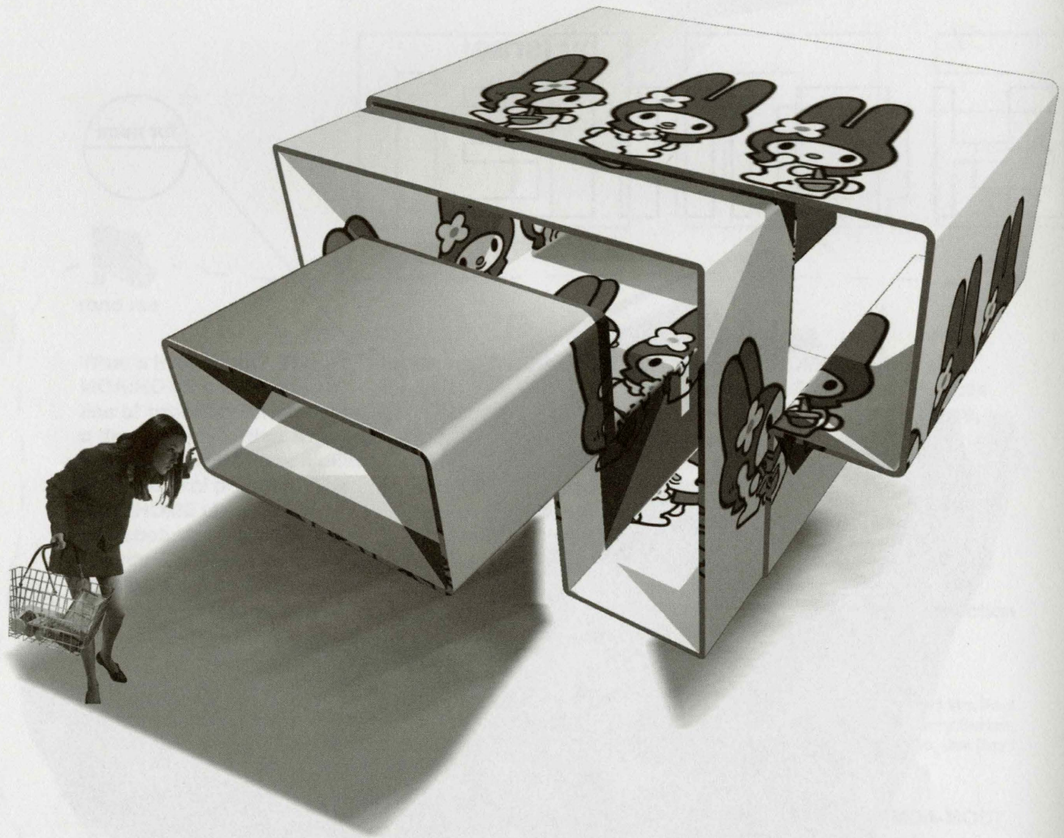
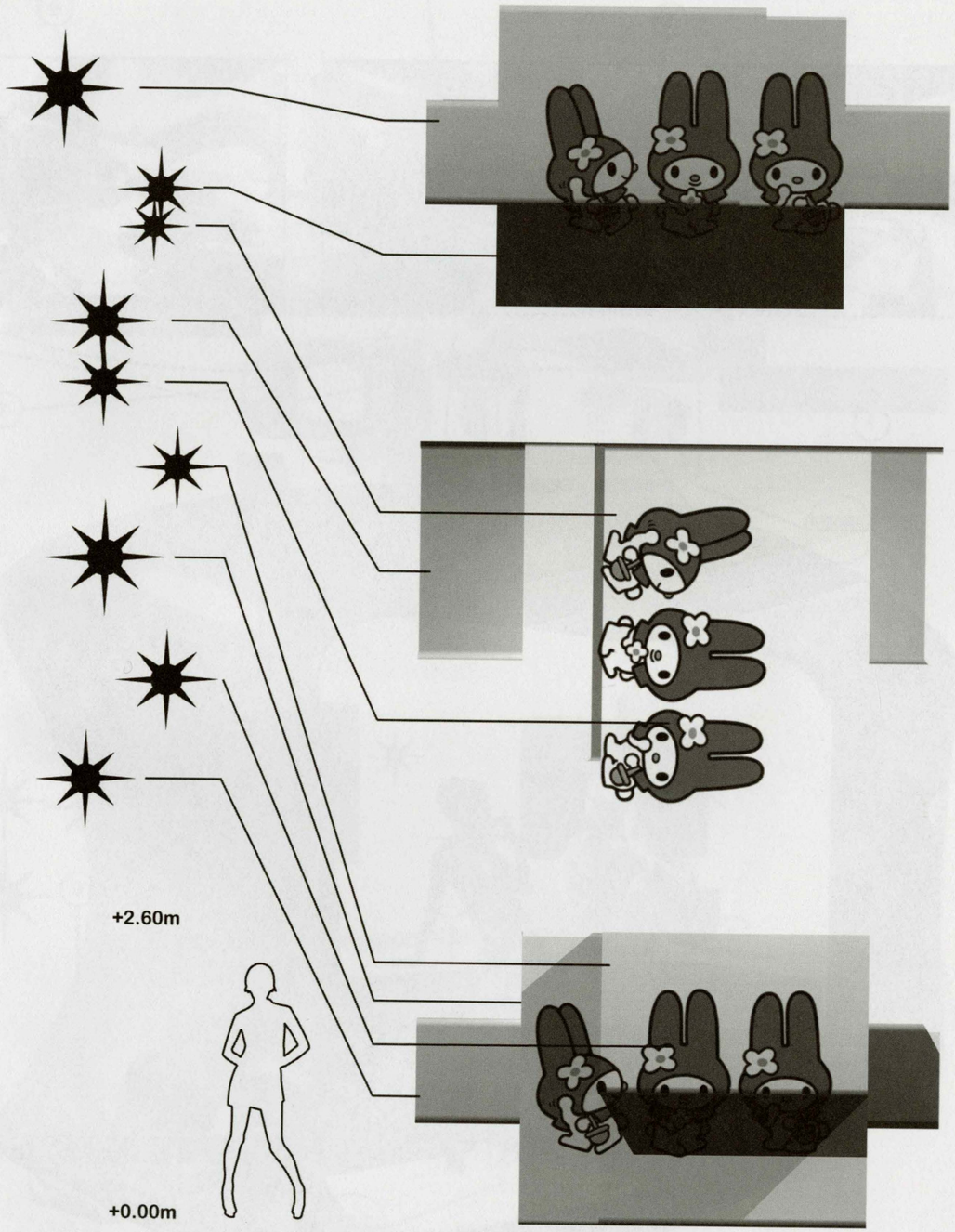
for mimi

tool shed no. 200001

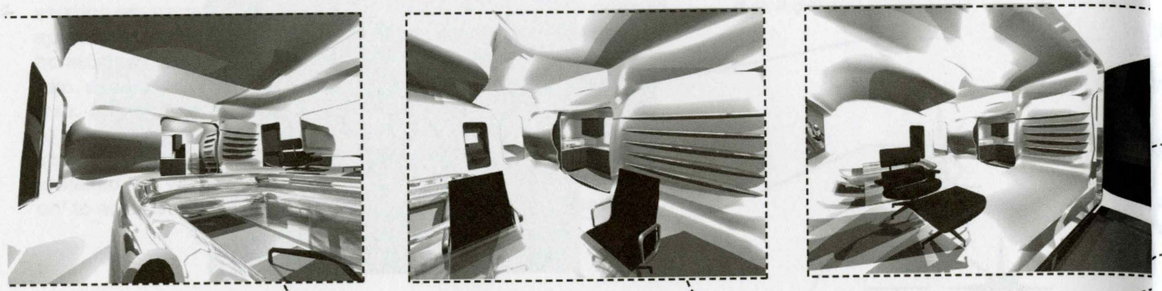
MOA:HOME introduces the toolshed. The toolshed can be strategically placed in any existing environment (studio apartment, suburban tract home, downtown loft, Roman ruin, even poolside) permit-free. Modeled after the scale of the aluminum tool shed sold at finer DIY shops, the toolshed is a way of 'adding-on' to an existing space without the hassle of building permits, creepy contractors and even creepier architects. The toolshed form is derived from a system of source sections connected either by extruding each section (this page) or by morphing along point-paths (previous page). The shell is lightweight molded fiberglass and can be mapped with sublimated graphics and textures. Best of all, when you get tired of it you can throw it away or sell it at a garage sale!



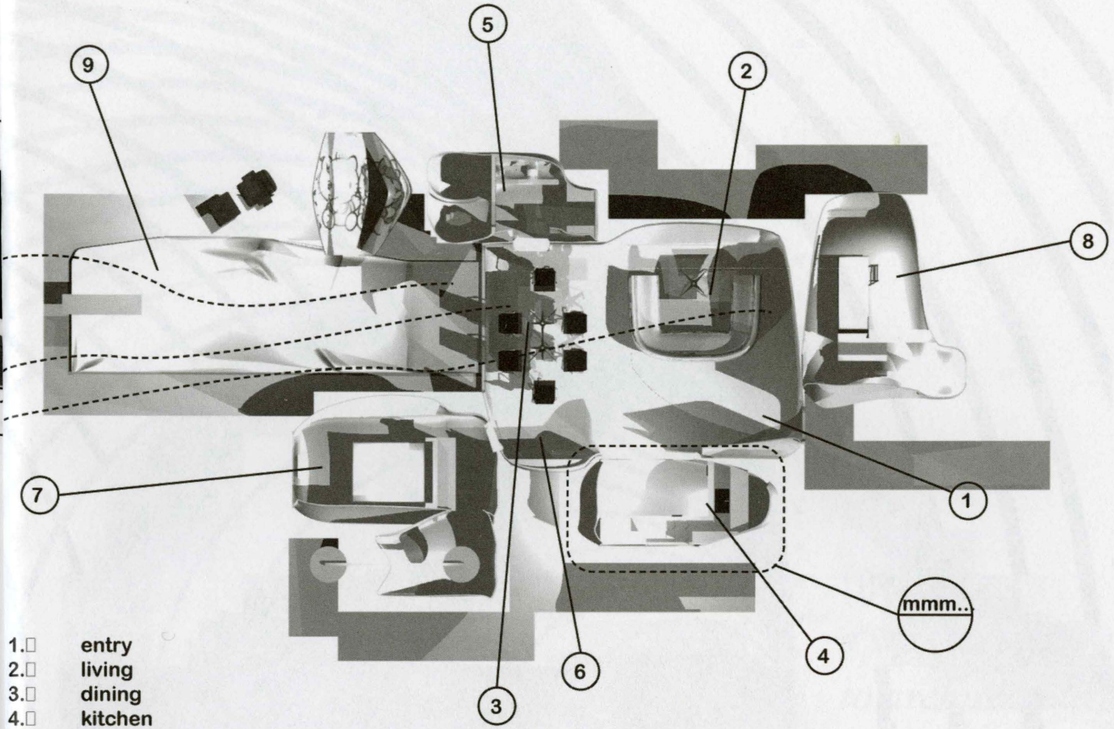
looks as if kate has found something she likes...



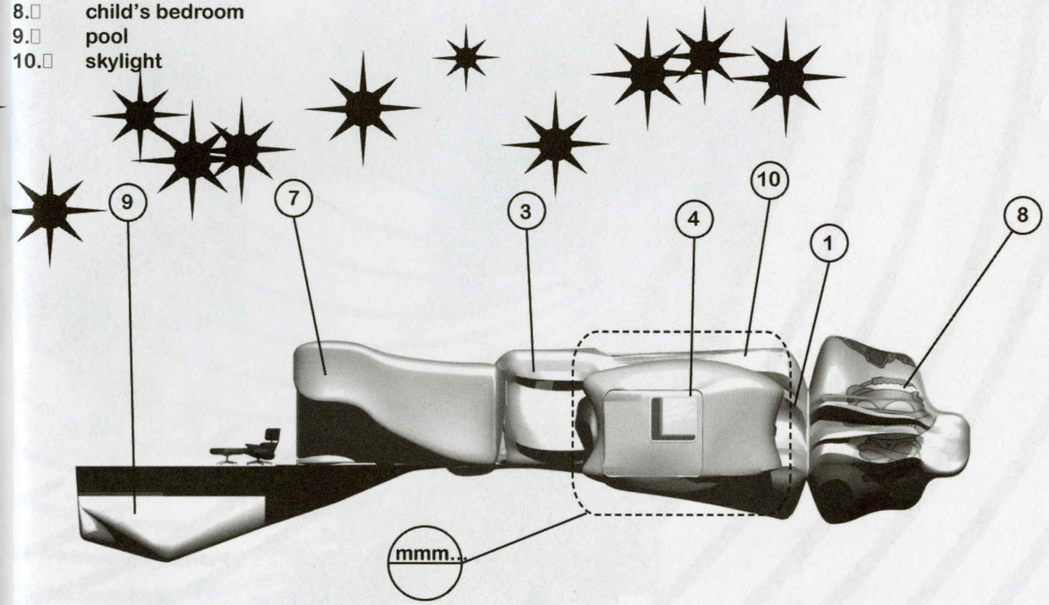
tool shed no. 990007e



mmm...



1. entry
2. living
3. dining
4. kitchen
5. bathroom
6. library
7. master suite
8. child's bedroom
9. pool
10. skylight



composite house no. 990004

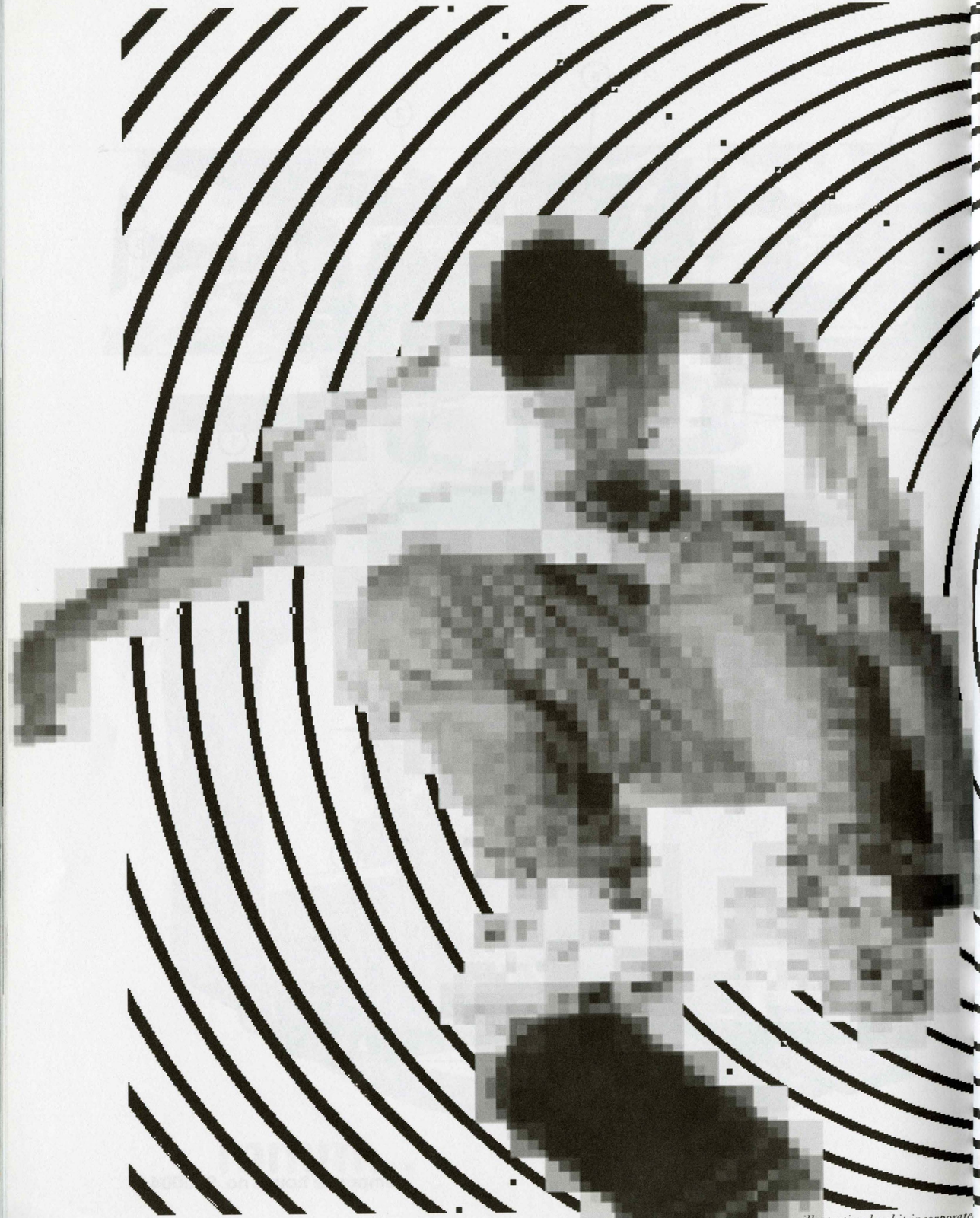
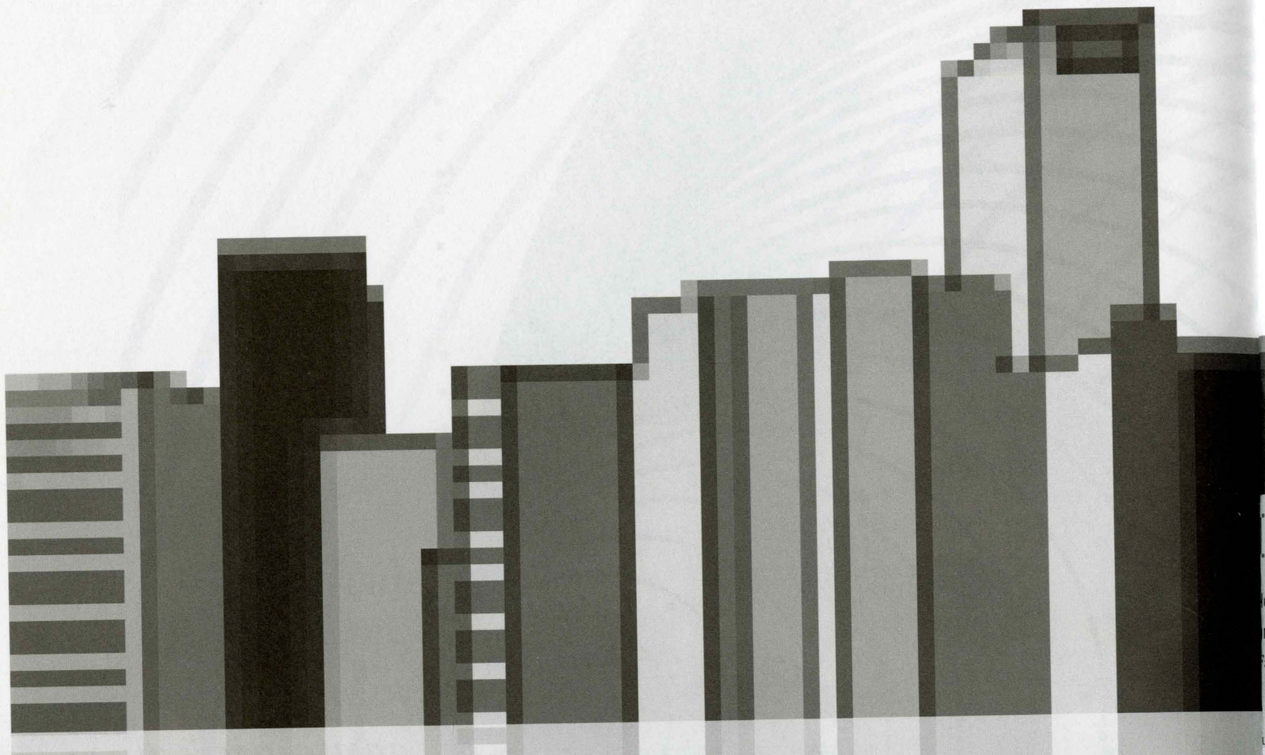


illustration by shit incorporate

[00]

a skateboarder's guide to architecture or an architect's guide to skateboarding

by Bobby Young



[01] *the performance:*

An object's use can only help dissipate its essential form and emphasize instead its attributes—each object is accompanied by its adjectives, substance is buried under its myriad qualities, man never confronts the object, which remains dutifully subjugated to him by precisely what it is assigned to provide...The object is always open, exposed, accompanied, until it has destroyed itself as closed substance, until it has cashed in all the functional virtues man can derive from the stubborn matter.

From "The World as Object" in Critical Essays *by Roland Barthes*

Skaters are from the future. We have developed new ways of moving through Space. Much like cats, we share special views in and on the Earth.

From Dysfunctional *by Garry Davis and Aaron Rose*

What is the relationship between skateboarding and architecture? In order to address this issue, we have to pose a broader question: what is the relationship between form and function. Architects are constantly investigating the relationship between form and function, from Vitruvius to Le Corbusier and Peter Eisenman. Rem Koolhaas' programmatic diagrams and Bernard Tschumi's notations begin to expose dynamic relationship between more flexible relationship between architecture and program. A former skateboarder and architect myself, I've come to an understanding that skateboarders are the most functional and engaged users of architecture and urban space.

The average pedestrian engages architecture and urban space at only one level, while skateboarders engage in multiple functional levels. An ambler sees a bench and sits on it? Exactly what the architect and designer intended. A skateboarder sees a bench and contemplates. How many different ways can I engage the form of this bench with my wooden board, metal trucks and four rubber wheels? First, I'll do a rail slide. Then perhaps a grind, regular then goofy footed, maybe into a rail slide. Lastly, perhaps a tailslide or a foot plant and then continue down the street until the next obstacle. They operate tactically, adjusting to the environment like a soldier in the jungle. This modus operandi is the essential difference between the pedestrian and skateboarder.

The average pedestrian experiences architecture a casual and indirect level, one that places architecture in the background of the user. For the skateboarder, the architectural landscape is the main focus; they experience it on a direct and specific level. It is a relationship of board to surface that relies on foot-driven improvisational thinking. For instance, a conventional wall generally differs from other surfaces due to its vertical orientation. A skateboarder does not discriminate on the basis of axis rather all surfaces are treated with equal vigor, engaging everything every which way they can. While financial districts in many cities throughout the world are empty on the weekend, you'll be sure to see skateboarders making use of public space by grinding and sliding away on corporate headquarters. An argument can be made that skateboarders are the most functional users of this architecture. Similar to the homeless, they engage architecture with a purist's devotion, optimizing every nuance of the urban realm.

Skateboarding is also a political act. An age group that cannot vote and is not well represented in public office; skateboarders are often restricted by law in their pursuit of architecture. "No Skateboarding" signs are commonplace on city streets and plazas in an attempt to keep the youth from grinding and sliding away on benches, handrail, steps, fountains and planters. While it is okay for office workers to eat brown bag lunches in the sanctioned "public space" of a corporate tower, skateboarders are shut down. With the police and security guards watching over them, skateboarders struggle to define their public territory. Unhappy and bored with skateparks created to keep them contained, they search for the next rail slide the urban landscape has to offer. Grinding is a political act.

[02] *mapping performance:*

Not only is an umbrella a thing, it is a thing that performs a function. What happens when a thing no longer performs its function—the umbrella has ceased to be an umbrella, it might once have been an umbrella, but now it has changed into something else.

From City of Glass *by Paul Auster*

What does architecture become when it no longer performs its intended function? Or when it performs several functions, not built into the design and how do we map these relationships which are not static but dynamic exchanges between the architecture and user? Although architects need to address this exchange or is it out of our hands to script them, but a few architects have explored ways in which to document these exchanges.

Some of the interiors of Rem Koolhaas' buildings look like a skateboarder's dream, with floors that arch into walls with a radius similar to a half-pipe or mini-ramp. His diagram of events attempts to uncover hidden connections between spaces and their associated programs, either tangible or intangible. In a diagram for the project Programmatic Lava in Yokohama, Japan he maps programmatic intensities in a 24 hour period. He measures when and how spaces are used, graphically showing how contiguous and unrelated programs can relate, sometimes overlapping and sometimes occupying the same physical space but at different times of the day/night. These diagrams open up the possibilities for the overlaying of multiple functions that co-mingle within the same space. When Koolhaas speaks of architecture one gets the sense that he is not an architect per se but a cruise director or an event planner. He finds the discipline of architecture limiting as architects are constantly defining, determining and closing the possibilities for architecture. Like a film director, Koolhaas sets the scene and then allows for his actors to improvise, leaving the architecture open with potential uses and interpretations. Koolhaas' tactics are comparable to spontaneous maneuvers made by skateboarders in the field to specific conditions. Koolhaas bows a wall to define a space and a skateboarder shifts his weight to maneuver around an obstacle embedded in the asphalt. Though the programmatic diagrams are intriguing attempts to come to terms with a dynamic architecture, the actual flexibility of his buildings in built form are still up for discussion.

In his 1994 book *Architecture and Disjunction*, Bernard Tschumi attempts to expose weaknesses in the relationship between space and content, stating his dissatisfaction with the conventional means of architectural documentation. He employs diagrams from dance choreography, music and sports in order to document the intangible movements within space. In the "Manhattan Transcripts," he makes these diagrams/actions the main focus of his project outlining three relations: transformational, spatial and programmatic sequence. Tschmui questions the casual links between spaces and its events asking, "Do cylindrical spaces go with religion and rectangular with industry?" By supplementing traditional architectural drawing with methods borrowed from other disciplines, which are concerned with the contained, not the container, he attempts to verify if there is a one-to-one relationship at work.

With the follies in the Parc de la Villette in Paris, Tschumi again attacks the space and content relationship by disassociating program from their respective traditional forms and employing methods from the "Manhattan Transcripts" project. He is mainly concerned with ideas of dislocation, disassociation and rupture. With these concepts, Tschumi creates the framework for multiple combinations and substitutions that exist simultaneously. In *Architecture and Disjunction*, he outlines three concepts: crossprogramming, transprogramming and disprogramming. Crossprogramming is the use of a space not as intended; Transprogramming is the combination of disparate programs; and Disprogramming is disparate programs that contaminate each other. These operations offer possibilities of combinations and permutation of existing programs as well new programs. In a sense it is a glossary for the skateboarder's use of the built environment.

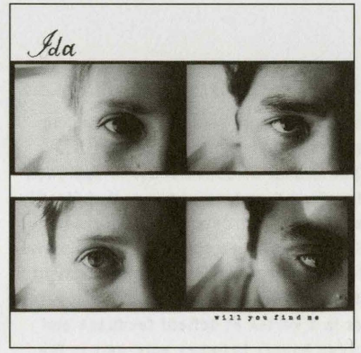
[03] *concluding performance:*

So what can skateboarders offer architects? First, we must admit that the connection between space and program is shaky. Second, we have to attempt to document these dynamic relationships between the architecture and its user. Last, we need to utilize these documents to begin to create a space that holds the possibility of improvisation by the user. With these attempts, the potential of new programs and spaces arises. Basically, architects must grind.

vinyl. films.
mp3. cds. zines.
videos.

Insound www.insound.com
neglecting average culture.

music reviews

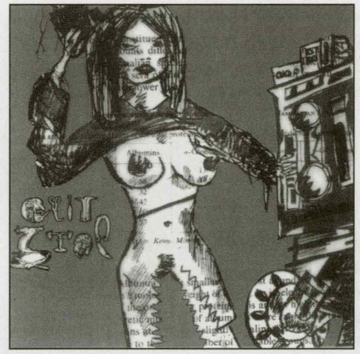


Ida

Will You Find Me

Tiger Style

The album, *Will You Find Me*, marks Ida's return to the indie stage after a stunted foray into the world of corporate rock. Their softly haunting harmonies hardly seem suited for mainstream radio anyway. Whether sounding like a toned down Fleetwood Mac, or a beefed up Cat Power, Ida is able to tackle sounding both sparse and lush in a way that doesn't contradict itself. And the result is simply beautiful. (Hilary Goldstein)



Clitstop

Compilation

Swezlex Recordings

This CD compilation should be viewed more as a homage to a small avant garde SOMA club than about the music, unless noise and distortion is your melody of choice. This small club/performance art-space houses acts that range from the bizarre to the deranged. If your taste is girls in duct tape rocking out, nerds playing rhythm and funk noise, or someone masturbating on stage while eating fruit, then you'll find your niche at Clitstop. But like most experimental art performances, the essential experience can only be a live one. (HG)

Shawn Lee

Monkey Boy

We Love You

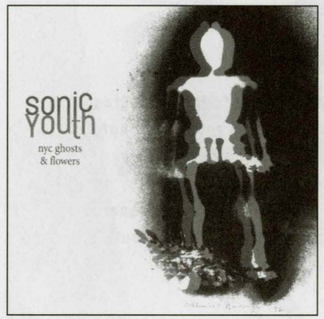
In today's hip-hop world of scrubs and thongs, not enough attention is focused on the roots of those soulful samples. It would seem that the basi of the funk and soul will forever be relegated to the 70s and early 80s. Bu there are a few artists who are paying their respects to the past while mov ing musically forward. Shawn Lee is one such soul brother whose innovativ style recalls that forgone funk with the added influences of fellow soulste Jeff Buckley. Though he may not garner a huge mainstream following, he just may be laying down tracks for future music scavengers. (HG)

Saint Etienne

Sound of Water

Sub Pop

Compared to their previous, club-friendly sound that has graced dance floors for the past ten years, on their latest release Saint Etienne trades in their platform shoes for a continental vacation spent sipping gin and tonics somewhere in the Mediterranean. *Sound of Water* is a cool, more reflective approach that unfolds like a forgotten postcard from a secret hideaway. With the help from collaborators such as To Rococo Rot and Sean O'Hagan (The High Llamas), their latest record is reminiscent of pastoral landscapes and softly sung lullabies. Songs such as "Don't Back Down" percolate with soft-focus textures amidst the flow of breathy vocals and soaring string arrangements. "Downey, CA" is a nostalgic portrait of Southern California while "How We Used to Be" sails through the expansive route of the album's nine-minute medley, navigated by starlight. The enjoyment from this record stems from its subtle, complimentary ability to become part of the listener's environment. So much, in fact, that the listener is aware of a floating sensation, as if being carried downstream to the sound of water. (Sean Baca)

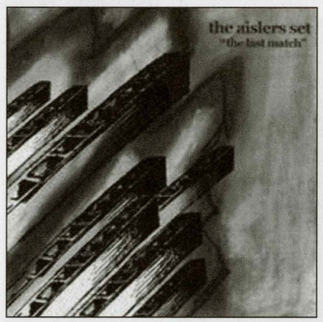


Sonic Youth

NYC Ghosts & Flowers

Geffen

Long before Alternative Rock was an alternative, Sonic Youth began screwing with the system, melding chaotic exploration with its progressive post-punk roots. *NYC Ghosts & Flowers* continues this stream-of-consciousness approach with a collage of sonic fragmentation and wall-of-sound methodology that literally spills from your speakers. From the moment the first shimmers of guitar resonate, the urban tone is set, focusing in on a direction and then spiraling out of control. "Free City Rhymes" is a meandering melody of sorts, dwelling upon a darkly lit street corner, slightly above the grasp of trees. "Renegade Princess" illuminates the cyclical nightmare of big city hookers in a vortex of defiant feedback and rising percussive waves. Bassist Kim Gordon hovers between eardrums in the spoken word incantation of "Side2side." And in "Small Flowers Crack Concrete," Thurston Moore describes a mechanized society based on violence and mistrust. Throughout most of the album, the band successfully strays from the confines of radio-friendly entertainment in search of new of aural stimulus. With *NYC Ghosts & Flowers*, Sonic Youth paints a feverish vision of impending skyscrapers and subways that seem to haunt and hinder a simpler existence. (SB)



The Aislers Set

The Last Match

Slumberland

Often for pop music to be appealing, it must have a timeless and youthful quality that is easily digestible without being bland. Although this formula seems easy enough, bands often fail miserably, opting instead to settle on the latest flavor of the month for a quick sugar fix. For The Aislers Set, one of San Francisco's latest gems, their version of pop music couldn't be more substantial. *The Last Match* is a spectacular batch of 60's-inspired, jangley pop tunes that pick up where the last album left us, crying for more. This time, brainchild Amy Linton, the sole innovator and performer behind 1998's Terrible Things Happen, has expanded her sound into a five-piece ensemble which includes cohorts from a variety of local indie band fave's. The result boasts 14 new songs that resonate with a live performance intonation, making each tune feel both spontaneous and classic. Take "One Half Laughing" with its surf-movie organ fills and Spectoresque chamber-room beat. Herein lies their secret: excavating the pertinent essence of songwriting from the past and then putting their own, modern spin on what's real without simply regurgitating the expected. The title track sways with s sure to follow, but don't it chalk up as another sickly-sweet track. A closer examination of the "la-la-la's" reveals the real message: "(and I) lied-ied-ied." "The Red Door" cranks up the juice with more to do with The Pixies than Brian Wilson, and revealing in the process the versatility of their songwriting. Whether its the bouncy hooks and vocals that reel you in, or the perfect production that comes off sounding rich and dignified, *The Last Match* is one record not to miss. (SB)

subject:
Re: <our ad>

hey - i just left you a message at work. (the receptionist recognizes my voice now)

i like them all. i like the green and pink one. the green one kind of seems to fit more though... the type is different. what happened to the type?

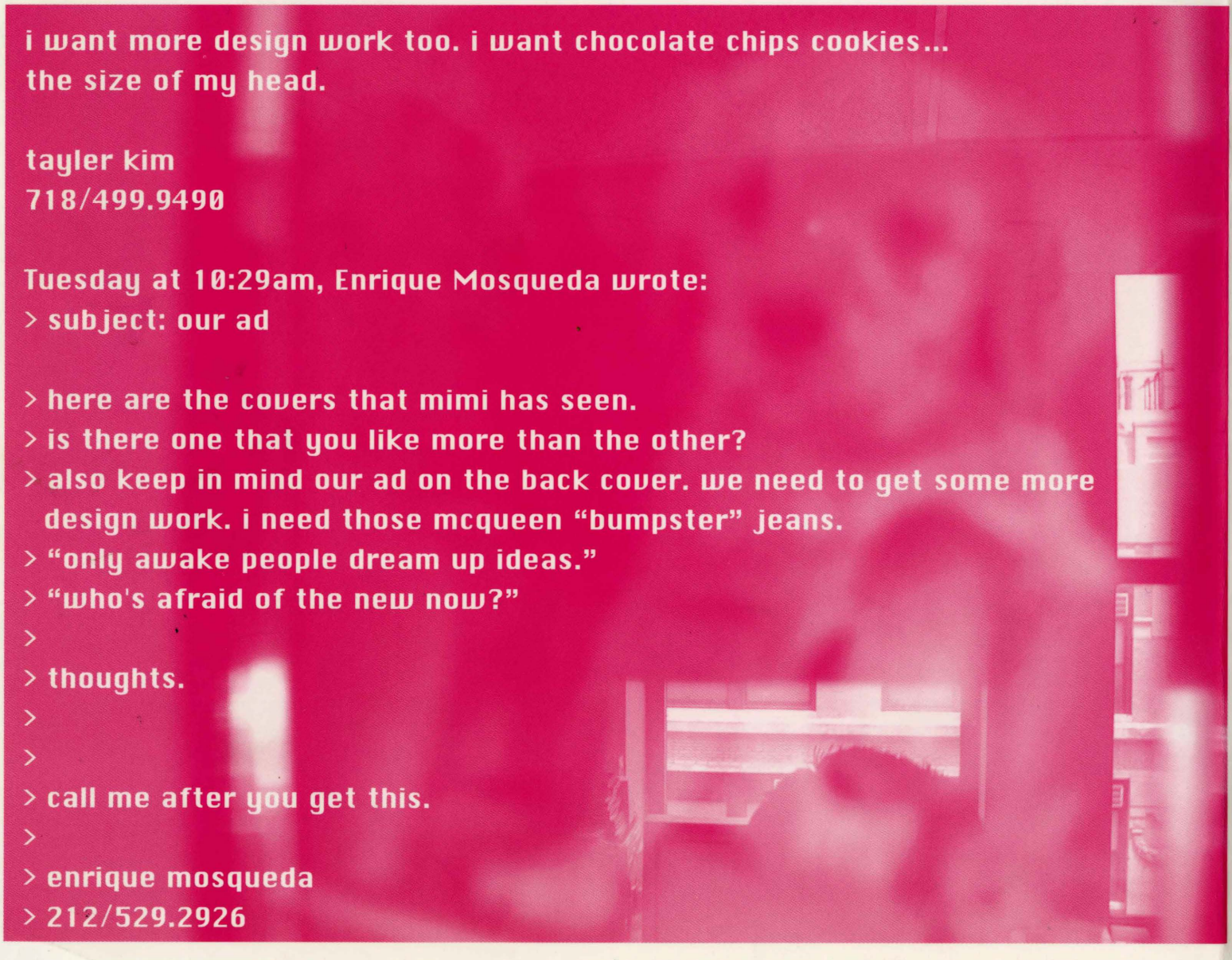
i don't know if i want an ad... do you want to just do one for yourself?

what's with the quotes? (i did have interesting dreams last night)

this morning i got a delivery error for mimi about the pdf file i sent. so i sent it again to her at loudpaper and the other place...

i want more design work too. i want chocolate chips cookies... the size of my head.

tayler kim
718/499.9490

Tuesday at 10:29am, Enrique Mosqueda wrote:
> subject: our ad

> here are the covers that mimi has seen.
> is there one that you like more than the other?
> also keep in mind our ad on the back cover. we need to get some more design work. i need those mcqueen "bumpster" jeans.
> "only awake people dream up ideas."
> "who's afraid of the new now?"
>
> thoughts.
>
>
> call me after you get this.
>
> enrique mosqueda
> 212/529.2926